

SPIN

The Ultimate
List Issue

75
Lists

of Rock's
Good,
Bad, and
Ugly

Awful Album
Covers!

Nasty Band
Names!

Missing Body
Parts!

Queens
of the
Stone Age

Hot Hot
Heat

Mötley Crüe
Backstage
Madness

Joy Division
25 Years Later
The Last Days
of Ian Curtis

NIN's
Trent
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nine inch nails

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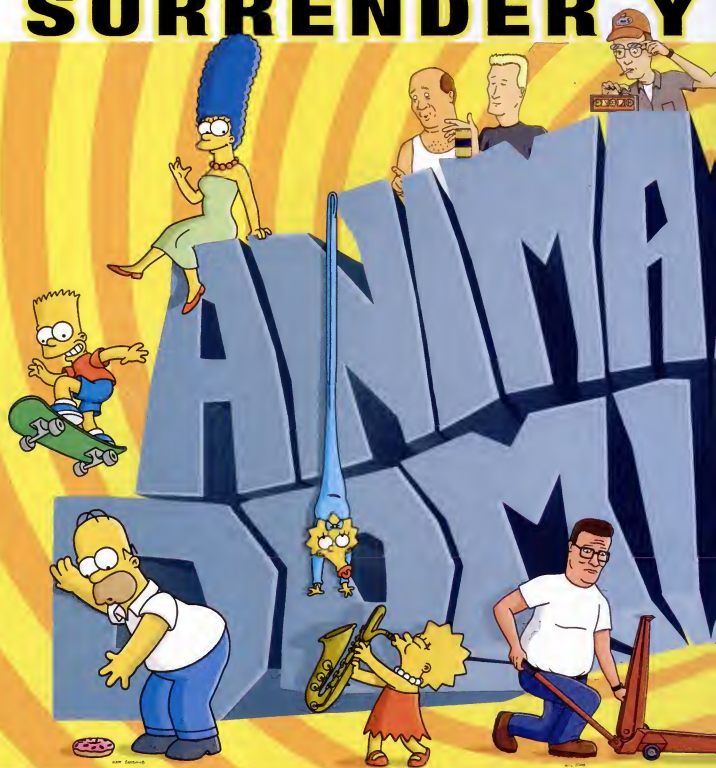
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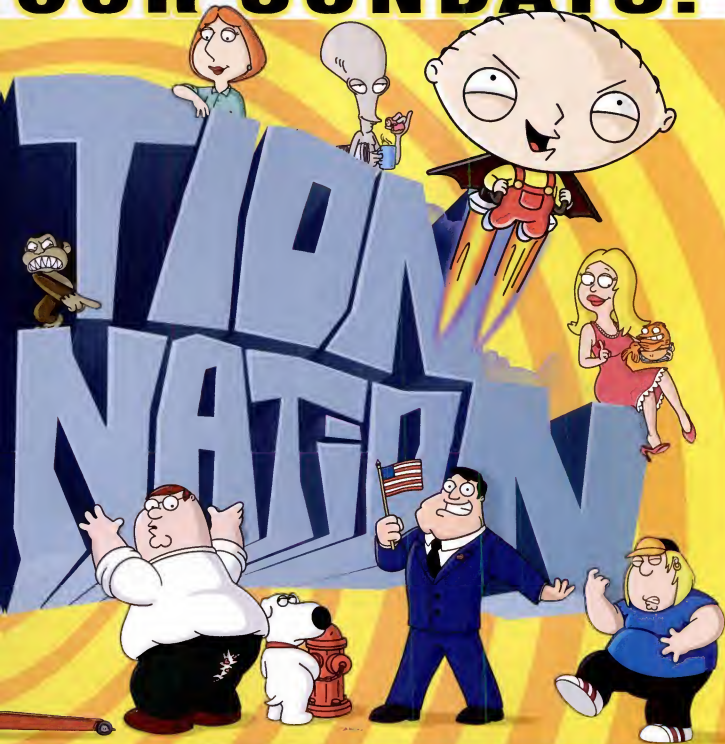
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Photograph by
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In May 1980, Joy Division frontman Ian Curtis took his own life. Now friends, family, and former bandmates tell the story of Curtis' death and the birth of the band's masterpiece, *Closer*. *By Brian Raftery*

ON THE COVER:

Trent Reznor photographed by Frank W. Ockenfels 3. Grooming: Cori Bardo/The Rex Agency. Styling: Evet Sanchez/The Wall Group. Gray shirt by Helmut Lang, available at H. Lorenzo; black canvas gun holster-type accessory, available at H. Lorenzo.

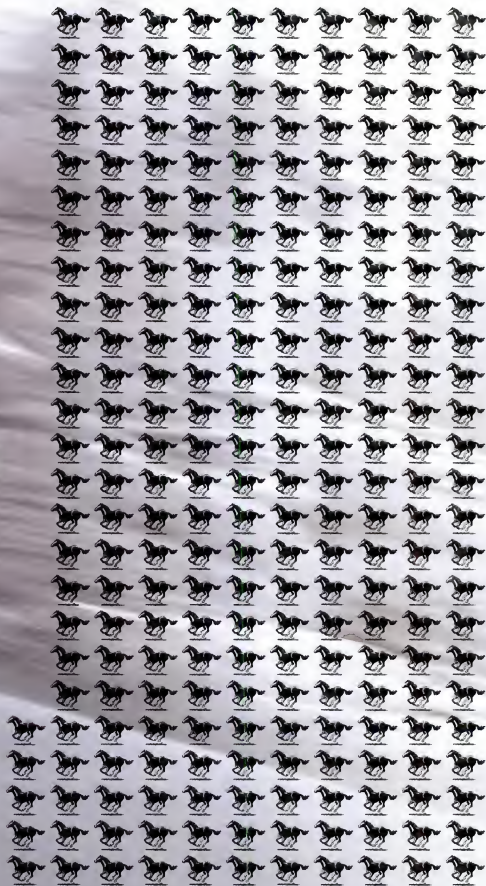


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contributors



TOMMIE SUNSHINE

WRITER, "PLAYLIST," page 104
SPECIAL GUEST "PLAYLIST" "Most new 'hip' bands are making dance music with guitars; it's time someone from the dance world took a look at music from that perspective."
UNDER THE INFLUENCE The Chicago-born remixer/producer/songwriter was raised on acid house, Guns N' Roses, and Devo.



FRANK W. OCKENFELS 3

PHOTOGRAPHER, "THE SHADOW OF DEATH," page 62
HEAD LIKE A CROW "Trent Reznor's hair covers his face and his eyes peek through—it's like looking at a crow now."
FAMILY GUY Ockenfels spends most of his free time trying to figure out his sons, Beckett and Cooper.



ADRIENNE DAY

WRITER, "PUNKY FOR LIFE," page 90
ROYAL MISTAKE "After one painfully late night with the Kompakt [Records] guys, two men dressed like Buckingham Palace guards awoke me in my hotel room at 9 A.M. Apparently, the desk clerk had mistaken me for a queen of England impersonator."
PLUGGED IN Day runs Spin.com.



SAVERIO TRUGLIA

PHOTOGRAPHER, "BANDS TO WATCH: FALL OUT BOY," page 42
POTENTIAL LYRICAL FOODER "One member took a liking to my stylist and asked her to marry him at least once. She gracefully declined."
DAD JUAN Truglia plans to document his retired father's "secret life" in Acapulco. "He's apparently a real Casanova."



SEAN MURPHY

PHOTOGRAPHER, "READY TO RUMBLE," page 86
THE STRIKE ZONE "Josh Homme originally held a baseball bat, then he almost didn't do the shot because he said there was something going on where he probably shouldn't have any weapons."
COME UNDONE Murphy shot the cover of the new Weezer album.

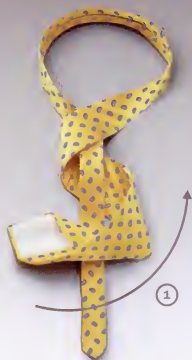


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feedback

WELL, SOMEBODY TOLD US THEY HAD A FAN BASE

As I lay here in my dorm room bed giggling like a school girl and sipping virgin vodka lemonades, I'm envious of *Spin's* opportunity to hang with some of the most brilliant people in music—and make it look so damn easy ["Gluttony, Envy, Wrath, Vanity, Avarice, Lust, and Sloth? We're Gamel" February]. I realized I was probably enjoying this issue just a little too much, so I asked myself: Have I had my sin today?

Deanna Wallach
Madison, New Jersey

I sympathize with Marc Spitz's unenviable task of trying to make those empty suits in the Killers seem interesting. He is to be commended for his valiant and unintentionally hilarious effort. Las Vegas is a philosophical gold mine, and the best they could do was a hair salon at the Mandalay and the Liberace Museum? I guarantee you that the guy driving the limousine would have been a better interview.

Dave García-Salamanca
Las Vegas

BLOWING UP IS HARD TO DO

It's no secret that pop culture is in its dying days. But then you crack open a *Spin* with the article "The Next Big Things" [February] and you are reminded of all the bands out there with art in their soul, teetering on the edge of stardom. To the artists: You keep playing; we'll keep listening. And to Conor Oberst: You have an honesty in your heart that's uncommon in our world ["The Only Living Boy in New York"].

Christopher Eric Rathlein
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Ahh, "The Next Big Things" issue, the one that always lets me realize how much my hipster heart likes new bands by stuffing my face with 62 of them. Well, I'm full and you've kept your New Year's resolution to find good music.

Caitlin Harsch
Overland Park, Kansas



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"The Killers are a great band who make awesome music. And what's wrong with being compared with '80s bands? The '80s were fun and so are the Killers." Debbie Force Youngstown, Ohio

THE PASSION OF THE GROUPIE

When I started reading the story about Connie Hamzy, I was certain that the piece would turn out to be judgmental ["Oldest Living Confederate Groupie Tells All," February]. I was wrong. It is a fine example of good, honest storytelling. In the end I felt like I met Hamzy on her own terms.

Peter Noah
New York City

It was about time you published an article about a rock'n'roll legend: Connie Hamzy.

Rodger Cambria captured her true spirit. Connie was always fun, pleasant, and truthful when I encountered her during my 30 years on the road (and, no, I never got a blowjob).

John David Kalodner
Los Angeles

Editor's note: Longtime A&R executive Kalodner has worked with Foreigner, Aerosmith, Whitesnake, and Night Ranger, among others.

When I stumbled upon your story on Sweet Connie, I found it pitiful. But as I read on, I formed a weird respect for this crazy woman. In a world where so many people are dishonest about who they are, this woman refuses to mince words about her passion for "sucking dick." I felt some sadness for Connie, as her show appears to be over. But she still has her bong, her memories, and her Franzia on ice.

Jennifer Campain
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Connie's story was fascinating—and I especially loved the bit about "Millimeter Peter" Frampton! But I think it's time she hung up the knee pads. It's no wonder that even Van Halen wouldn't have anything to do with her anymore.

Mickey Warnock
San Lorenzo, California

IT'S ABOUT TIME

The great pride and satisfaction I felt while reading your feature on the Montreal music scene ["The Next Big Scene: Montreal,"

February] was somewhat offset by the realization that our fair city was on the verge of being invaded by a swarm of clueless record-industry types. I guess the time is right to reunite my old high school band and position it as influential in the rock community. In any case, thank you for giving long-overdue props to some talented and hardworking local bands and for exposing this area's best-kept secret. There's really nowhere else we would rather be. Now, if they could only give us back our baseball team.

Rob Rossi
Montreal

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I don't understand why *Spin* chose to publish such a lengthy article on an aging groupie. I was a teenager during the hair-band era and spent a fair amount of time backstage. There were at least 20 girls like Connie at every show, and I don't get what makes her so remarkable. Eventually, I started wondering why we girls weren't creating music of our own.

Courtney Burton
Springfield, Missouri

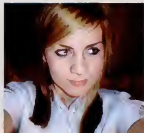


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Every issue, the author of the Letter of the Month will win a cool prize.* Congratulations to Courtney Burton, who has won a pair of AN4045 sunglasses, courtesy of Arnette.

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READER OF THE MONTH



Kimberly Steinmetz, 19,
Tallahassee, Florida

Occupation: Student

Music: Interpol, the Velvet Underground, the Jesus and Mary Chain, Josephine Baker

Hobbies: Dancing, introducing people to new music

Hates: Jules Asner and mayonnaise mixed with ketchup

February issue verdict: Good idea to have world-famous Connie Hamzy in this issue. Aspiring groupies need to know that she and Winona Ryder go through hard times too!

Do you wanna be a Reader of the Month? Yeah, you do! Send your responses and a high-resolution .jpg image file to readersofthemonth@spin.com—or post a photo to the address below c/o "Reader of the Month."

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noise

□ Backstage Pass By Marc Spitz

Statutory Romp

Although we were relegated to the pressroom at the Grammy Awards at Los Angeles' Staples Center in February, according to Kanye West, our mere presence made us champions. "We're all winners for the fact that we're here," West proclaimed shortly after losing Best New Artist to Maroon 5. "Maroon 5, they're just too good. Like **OutKast** last year." Maroon 5's Adam Levine said his band's victory was "shocking," adding, "Everyone in the room expected [Kanye] to win. I think I thanked him first. He deserves it as much as we do."

Beach Boy/national treasure **Brian Wilson** certainly deserved his MusiCares Person of the Year Award (the group gives out the honor every Grammy weekend), but judging by his serious ice, it was clear he didn't donate all his money to charities. "They're supposed to be cute," Wilson told us when we inquired about the large diamonds on his pin. "It just represents class." You write "God Only Knows" and you need diamonds to give you class? We think no. **Jack White**, looking like a less bloated and hate-filled version of Korn frontman **Jonathan Davis**, squirmed national treasure number two, **Loretta Lynn**, around all night. "Is this a new

5.05

□ News, Gossip, Bands... Your Month in Music Starts Here



"We're above this": U2

romance for you?" we wondered. "What do you mean, new romance?" quipped White, pleased with Lynn's two wins. "Me and Jack have known each other for a long time," Lynn clarified. "It was his idea to do this album. He produced it, and he done a great job."

Velvet Revolver singer **Scott Weiland** was equally proud of his role in the all-star performance of the Beatles' "Across the Universe." "It was truly monumental," he said. "One of those moments where your hair stands up on the back of your neck." The jam was for a good cause (sunami relief), so we didn't say anything snarky, like "What about the weird-ass hair on top of your head? What did that do?"



"When I squeeze, you say you're proud of me, remember?": Weiland and Lynn; Weiland and his ex-wife (left)

Postshow, the stars and the people who drive them places hit after-parties all across the Southland. Kanye took over a building on Wilshire Boulevard. **U2** celebrated their three trophies with label head **Jimmy Iovine** in Laurel Canyon. **Green Day** hung out at Bar Marmot in West Hollywood, and **Prince** and **Nick Carter** threw house parties. By the end of the weekend, we felt toxic with celeb exposure, but we'll pull through. We'll just keep telling ourselves "we're all winners" until the vomiting stops. *Reported by Carrie Borzillo-Vrenna*

Clive and Let Die

We don't know legendary record-industry impresario **Clive Davis** personally, but after being deprived of the chicken dinner at his pre-Grammy Awards bash three years running, we feel like we do. For nearly three decades, Mr. Davis' party has been opulent and star-studded, and Clive D did not disappoint with his latest, held February 12 at Los Angeles' Beverly Hills Hotel. **Kid Rock**, who gave us a hundred dollars two years ago, kept his wallet in his pocket this year but did make fun of us for our lack of real access. The Kid actually pointed and laughed at us. We finally managed to scam a place at table 62, which was so far from the stage we could smell ocean air. From our distant seat, we observed comic **Eddie Griffin** hitting on **Sharon Stone** and wondered if the duo could bump each other up to, like...the B-minus list. "You think I'm kidding?" Griffin repeated as he propositioned Stone. "I'm serious!" We also saw Prince sneak out during Maroon 5's set (other performers included American Idol '04 **Fantasia**, **Usher** with Kanye West, **Mary J. Blige**, **Diana Ross**, **Alicia Keys**, and **Jamie Foxx**, who did his Ray Charles impression—again).

Once it became apparent no waiter had chicken for us we decided to roll—and we're glad we did, because we met the man who wrote every great rock riff of the past 40 years (and stole the rest from old bluesmen), **Jimmy Page**, who'd been chatting with **Paul Stanley** of **Kiss**. We spotted **Franz Ferdinand**'s **Alex Kapranos**, model/actress **Milla Jovovich**, and **Dave Grohl** before we found ourselves face to face with the host. "So, Mr. Davis, how do you keep this party so hot year after year?" we asked. "You give them what they want," he told us. "They want music and stars, and we have them in abundance." And we have...dinner rolls. *Reported by Carrie Borzillo-Vrenna*



West, singing the praises of free poultry



Strange love: Stone and Griffin



The Killers' Mark Stoermer and Flowers wonder what to tell airport security



Liam Gallagher's finger is frozen in this position

an achievement," he said. We waited for a Gallagherian quip: "No thanks to our record label in the States, who are a bunch of fucking idiots, and you can quote me on that." Brother Liam drank one Grolsch after another, which could explain why he hit the loo every five minutes...or maybe not. As Liam accepted their Best Music DVD award, he suggested another possibility: "Liam is too overwhelmed to come up here. Either that or he's in the toilet being very 1995."

The highlight of the event came when Godlike Genius Award recipients New Order performed Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart" and their own 2001 single "Crystal." Rumor had it that estranged former bandmates Pete Doherty and Carl Barât were going to stage a



"Trade you this hat for new pants?": Lewis

Maybe We're Amazed

What would you do if you saw a living **Beatle** in person? And not even Ringo, but **Sir Paul McCartney**. If you were us (and you were, at the Shockwaves NME Awards 2005 at London's Hackersmith Palais, and you were tipsy, thanks to jet lag and blueberry vodka drinks), you would respond by shouting, "Holy fuck! **Beatle!**" **Brandon Flowers**, who accepted the **Killers'** award for Best International Band, was similarly awestruck when he spotted the **Pet Shop Boys** and **New Order** (essentially his **Beatles**). "Oh my gosh, I can't take this!" he gushed. Counting on the cliché that Brits find American audacity endearing, we claimed the seat next to **Noel Gallagher**. **Oasis** recently got the news that they'd sold out their upcoming performance at Madison Square Garden. "It's quite

Libertines reunion, but Doherty (linked to heroin, crack, and most recently **Kate Moss**) was sick and home with his mum. After the awards, old friends **Josh Homme** and **Shirley Manson** chatted, while **Juliette Lewis**, dressed like a cheeky mime, split her supertight black pants and fled with a shirt tied round her waist. By that time, everyone was heading to the local Working Men's Club, where the **Bravery** played a very unsecret after-show to an audience that included members of the **Kaiser Chiefs** and **Franz Ferdinand**. Following their set, Sir Paul walked onstage and performed a tear-jerking rendition of "In My Life," with the ghosts of **John Lennon** and **George Harrison**. Okay, no he didn't. But tucked away in our crap British motel bed later that night we dreamed he had, and it was amazing. *By Elizabeth Goodman*

Time to Quit

We kinda assumed that **Luna** would always be around. Like **Phyllis Diller**. But it was not to be. Those most romantic and sardonic of cello-packing rockers called it a career with four sold-out shows at New York City's Bowery Ballroom, concluding on February 28. **Dean Wareham** and company played cocktail-hour classics like "Tiger Lily" and "California (All the Way)" for the last time, in front of a teary house of aging hipsters. "Stop crying, you're going to make me cry," Wareham scolded the audience. Champagne was brought out for the last song ("23 Minutes in Brussels") and flowed through the postshow party. "It was a very

emotional day," Wareham, 41, told us, adding, with a little bitterness, "Why should we keep going? We could, but I'm looking forward to doing something else. I'm tired of organizing my life around a rock'n'roll band." Keep it here for updates on Luna's impending reunion and all other legendary and semi-legendary indie-rock bands.

Reported by Greg Chow



Going home for good: Last call for Luna



After making hipsters half their age sweat beer at Manhattan's MisShapes party, Steve Mackey and Jarvis Cocker of Pulp take a break to welcome M.L.A. into the pop cultural VIP room. The weekly event (named after a Pulp track) doubled as the after-show for her sold-out performance at the Knitting Factory in February.

DO PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE STRANGE??? DO YOU??? FEELING LIKE THERE IS JUST NO LOVE??? IS THIS THE END OF THE WORLD??? CAN ANY PHILOSOPHY PRESERVE US FROM SUCH IMPALING FACTS??? WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY??? WHO FARTED??? WHY DID THEY DO IT??? WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING??? WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR ROUTINE WHEN IT ALL COMES DOWN ON US AT ONCE??? DON'T YOU FEEL RESPONSIBLE??? WILL YOU STILL BE SAME ENOUGH TO LAUGH??? HAVE YOU BEEN GETTING ANY LATELY??? HOW ARE YOU??? BY WHAT MEANS WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO DIE??? WHAT'S THE DEAL HERE??? JUST WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF??? DO YOU SOMETIMES LOOK BACK AT YOURSELF 3 OR 4 YEARS AGO AND THINK "GOD, WHAT A JERK??? DO YOU HEAR VOICES MUTTERING IN YOUR HEAD, FAINT AND INDISTINCT??? DO YOU USE CREDIT CARDS IRRESPONSIBLY IN HOPES OF LATER PAYMENT??? DO YOU GET MESSAGES FROM SPACE BEAMED INTO YOUR SKULL??? DO YOU ENJOY FILING, STACKING, RE-SORTING THEM??? WOULD YOU LOVE TO GO LOOTING DURING A RIOT??? DO YOU WORRY ABOUT YOUR BRAIN??? DO YOU DREAM OF CONTROLLING THE WORLD??? WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, DID YOU TORTURE SMALL ANIMALS AND BUGS??? DO YOU FIND IT UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPREHEND THE OPPOSITE SEX??? DOES YOUR TEMPER STAY DORMANT MOST OF THE TIME, ONLY TO SUDDENLY EXPLODE INTO QUASI-INSANE RAGE??? DO YOU WONDER WHEN THE MUSIC DIED??? DO YOU TAKE LIFE LYING DOWN??? DO YOU LIKE TO DRIVE FAST AS HELL, WITH YOUR CAR STEREO CRANKED UP ALL THE WAY??? DO YOU OFTEN "TUNE OUT" THE WORLD WHILE CONCENTRATING??? DO YOU FEEL YOU "MARCH TO THE BEAT OF A DRUNKEN DRUMMER??? DO YOU FORGET WHERE YOU JUST PUT THINGS??? DO YOU CATCH YOURSELF SHOOTING OFF AT THE MOUTH??? DO YOU SOMETIMES WANT TO FIRE A DEER RIFLE INTO YOUR TV??? DO YOU OFTEN LIE WHEN THE TRUTH WOULD SUFFICE??? DO YOU BLURT OUT WELL-MEANT BUT UNCOIN STATEMENTS AND THEN IMMEDIATELY REGRET IT??? DO YOU SOMETIMES SMASH THE BEJEZUS OUT OF YOUR FINGER WHEN USING A HAMMER??? DO YOU HAVE SPELLS DURING WHICH YOU ARE PICKED OFF OR DEPRESSED FOR WHAT YOU LATER DECIDE WAS NO GOOD REASON??? DO YOU COMMONLY HEAR RANDOM NOISES AND MISTAKE THEM FOR MUSIC??? WOULD YOU REALLY RATHER SIT AROUND AND WATCH TV THAN GO OUT??? ARE YOU FAIRLY WELL-ASSURED THAT YOU'RE SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE GAZOOBA??? DO YOU GET FIXATED ON ONE AMUSING LITTLE ACTIVITY AND THEN "GO AT IT" DAY AND NIGHT??? ARE YOU SCIENTIFIC RATHER THAN SUPERSTITIOUS??? WHEN YOU GET IMPATIENT WITH AN INANIMATE OBJECT, DO YOU TEAR IT TO SHREDS??? DO CERTAIN TEXTURES OR NOISES MAKE YOUR SKIN CRAWL??? DO YOU OFTEN STAY UP ALL NIGHT??? DOES MONKEY "BURN A HOLE IN YOUR POCKET"? DOES EVERYTHING SEEM A LITTLE UNEAL TO YOU??? DO YOU HAVE CERTAIN SECRETS THAT NO ONE ELSE KNOWS??? HAVE YOU EVER HAD A PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE??? SEEN A UFO??? DO YOU LET JOBS STACK UP, RATIONALIZING THAT YOU WORK BETTER UNDER PRESSURE??? DOES DISORDER IN YOUR WORK AREA DRIVE YOU NUTS??? DO YOU SPOUT BROAD GENERALIZATIONS ON SUBJECTS ABOUT WHICH YOU KNOW LITTLE OR NOTHING??? DO YOU FIND HUMAN FOLLY AMUSING??? DO YOU LIVE IN YOUR OWN LITTLE WORLD??? DO YOU LIKE TO GO OUT AT NIGHT WITH FRIENDS, BEING ROWDY AND DISTURBING THE PEACE??? DO YOU ALWAYS NEED TO FART DURING THE MOST SOLEMN OCCASIONS??? DO YOU GET ALL HOPPED UP ON GOLF BALLS AND MAKE ELABORATE PLANS THAT WILL NEVER COME OFF IN A MILLION YEARS??? WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE IN PAIN OR DISCOMFORT DO YOU LAUGH, OR WANT TO??? DO YOU LIKE YOUR JOB/SCHOOL/CHORES??? DO YOU COMPULSIVELY READ ANY INANE THING (LABELS, ADS) THAT HAPPENS TO BE WITHIN VISION??? DO YOU SOMETIMES GET THE IMPRESSION THAT EVERYBODY IS OUT TO GET YOU??? DO PEOPLE CONSIDER YOU ODD??? DO YOU HAVE DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES ACCORDING TO WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO??? DO YOU SOMETIMES MAKE FACES, SING, TWITCH, ETC. FOR NO SANE REASON??? WOULD YOU JUST AS SOON LET OTHERS MAKE THE TEDIOUS DECISIONS??? DO YOU BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY WITH FAMILY THAN WITH FRIENDS??? DOES EVERYTHING ALWAYS TAKE TWICE AS LONG AND COST TWICE AS MUCH AS YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD??? ARE YOU ALWAYS LATE??? DO YOU EASILY "BLOW THINGS OFF AND PROCRASTINATE"? IS TODAY'S YOUTH MORE SCREWED UP THAN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS??? DO YOU IGNORE YOUR HEALTH FOR LONG PERIODS??? DO YOU SOMETIMES GET ALL "SPACED OUT" AND "DINGY" FOR NO APPARENT REASON??? DO YOU SOMETIMES FEEL PARANOIA ABOUT PEOPLE WATCHING YOU AND LAUGHING AT YOU??? DO YOU EVER DREAM YOU ARE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND YOU SUDDENLY NOTICE YOU ARE WEARING NO PANTS??? DO YOU FIND THE CORPORATE BLEND OF AUDIO AND VISUAL PLEASURE ANNOYING??? DOES YOUR T.V. FAIL TO "PUT OUT"? DO YOU SOMETIMES GO OUT BEATING UP STRANGERS??? DO YOU OCCASIONALLY SHOPLIFT "IN REVENGE"? ARE YOU MORE OR LESS CHEERFUL AROUND OTHERS??? DO YOU SOMETIMES THINK YOU SHOULD "QUIT"? DO YOU OR DID YOU DO LOUSY THINGS TO YOUR ELDERS, JUST TO BUG THEM??? DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOBIAS, FEARS, COMPULSIONS??? DO YOU SOMETIMES DWELL MORBIDLY ON THINGS LIKE SICKNESS, WORLD PROBLEMS, DEATH, DRUGS, PAIN, PERVERSION??? ARE YOU EVEN SLIGHTLY SICK IN THE HEAD??? DO YOU SOMETIMES FRET IRRATIONALLY OVER FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES??? HAVE YOU LOST PRETTY MUCH ALL FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT??? DO YOU BITE INTO AN APPLE AND THEN WORRY ABOUT THE WEIRD, CHEMICAL TASTE ON THE SKIN??? DO YOU USE OUR NATION'S PRESIDENT AS A SCAPEGOAT??? DO YOU THINK JUSTICE CAN BE BOUGHT??? DO YOU INSTINCTIVELY FEEL THAT ALL PUBLIC FIGURES ARE LIARS??? DO YOU GET A MINI HEART ATTACK EVERY TIME YOU SEE A COP??? DO YOU AUTOMATICALLY DISLIKE MEMBERS OF STRANGE RELIGIOUS CULTS??? WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK, WOULD YOU JUST AS SOON WATCH SOME CHEAP, STUPID ENTERTAINMENT OR MORE EDUCATIONAL FARE??? DOES IT IRRITATE THE HELL OUT OF YOU TO SEE WRITERS USE CLICHES??? DO YOU FALL MADLY IN LOVE, ALL THE TIME??? IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" THEN THIS JUST MAY BE YOUR MUSIC CHANNEL.

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Rift Notes on 50 Cent's Beef and Peace

Your key to the classic feud between 50 Cent and the Game
By Chris Ryan

MAIN CHARACTERS

50 Cent: One-man platinum factory; G-Unit chieftain; chesty beef magnet

The Game: Compton-based N.W.A. disciple; compulsive name-dropper; adjunct G-Unit member

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

In the days leading up to the release of his second album, *The Massacre*, 50 Cent publicly derides the newest member of his G-Unit crew, the Game, and claims to have penned six songs on his debut album, *The Documentary*. In Act I, 50 issues an unrelated dis track, "Piggy Bank," throwing jabs at New York rhyme royalty Jadakiss and Fat Joe because the pair appeared on a song with 50's known antagonist, Ja Rule. The original feud escalates in Act II, when 50 excommunicates the Game from G-Unit during a radio interview, and an altercation between their two entourages ends in a shooting. The conflict resolves in Act III, as 50 and Game call a truce on the anniversary of the Notorious B.I.G.'s death, the same day that first-week sales figures for *The Massacre* top more than one million.

SUMMARIES AND ANALYSIS OF MAJOR EVENTS

ACT I

50 Cent has a history of dropping truculent, high-profile dis tracks, whether threatening to take rappers' jewelry ("How to Rob") or Ja Rule's life ("Back Down"). But his language on "Piggy Bank" is less daunting, his targets less serious (Fat Joe's waistline, Nas' Kelis tattoo), and the song's central image is an unthreatening piggy bank, a child's toy. Some readers may infer that 50 is using symbolism to imply that rap is merely a game (not to be confused with the Game). The track also raises dramatic questions that will be answered in Acts II and III: Has 50 Cent changed his attitude toward his competition? Does his hubris fore-shadow a tragic fall?

ACT II

During an interview on New York radio station Power 105.1, 50 drops the Game from G-Unit, citing his protégé's lack of loyalty (Game had previously announced his intention to collaborate with Nas, another 50 Cent nemesis). In so doing, his actions reference the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, with 50 Cent in the role of the Almighty (see also *My Fair Lady*, a dramatization of a

mentee rebelling against her mentor). The decision calls into question 50's moral code, which curiously permits shooting people, thus illustrating the complexities of the very rich. Later that day, 50 rails on Game at Hot 97, and Game, who is also in New York, bolts over to the station to confront him. The heedless frivolity of this pursuit underlines the basic frivolity of their relationship; meanwhile, someone named "Peanut" is shot in the leg, and the gunman attempts to flee on a passing snowplow. The same night, gunfire strikes the 25th Street office that houses 50's management; the bullets serve as a metaphor for the world of violence inhabited by the warriors, although these particular metaphors can, in fact, literally kill people.

ACT III

50 and the Game's truce, announced at Harlem's previously distinguished Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, is at once disingenuous (they clearly still dislike one another) and generous (they both make ample donations to the Harlem Boys Choir). Perhaps prodded by Jimmy Iovine—chairman of Interscope (their label)—Aftermath honcho Dr. Dre, fart-joke enthusiast Eminem, and possibly former President Jimmy Carter, the two men not only reconcile, but embrace. The intimacy of their physical contact confuses some, as hip-hop traditionally scorns actions that could be read as homoerotic. However, as Acts I and II have demonstrated, 50 and the Game have a fraternal relationship marked by the biblical jealousy that afflicted Cain and Abel. Though their bond was threatened by the Game's attempt to assert his independence from the family, in the interests of pleasing their father (represented by the record company), the brothers make peace.



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS



Fat Joe: Starts, enjoys beef



Ja Rule: Draws 50 Cent's wrath



Jadakiss: Mad skills, mad dude

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Q&A Shirley Manson

By Caryn Ganz

Eleven years ago a trio of supersavvy producers led by Butch Vig persuaded a brassy Scottish singer named Shirley Manson to join their band. Three records of shimmering, energetic rock (and six Grammy nominations) later, Garbage were physically and emotionally ailing. But rather than trash efforts to record a fourth album, they reconciled to make *Bleed Like Me*, which captures their turmoil in a crush of wailing guitars and blasting synths. We talked to Manson, 38, about the nightmare she recently lived (and the fantasy she didn't).

Rumor has it Garbage broke up during the recording of *Bleed Like Me*. I don't necessarily think we technically split up. The intense desire to split up was definitely afoot. Everybody felt violently sick coming into this turgid atmosphere in the studio in the beginning.

Were your differences musical or personal? After you've been in a band for ten years, it's really difficult to explain to anybody what is driving you insane about the dynamic. And

it's pretty pathetic when a band who have had a lot of success can't muster any enthusiasm. We took some time off, and mercifully, we did come back and make a record the way we wanted to and actually had fun making it.

So ultimately it was a good experience? It was a happy ending; isn't that beautiful?

We all love happy endings. Unfortunately, your friend Courtney Love has been having

a pretty tough time lately. She's been very busy getting herself completely fucked-up. The way she handled herself, she certainly did herself no favors. But [the Libertines'] Pete Doherty is equally, if not more fucked-up, and he's applauded and idolized. Yet Courtney is castigated and ridiculed. I think she is flawed and she is no saint, but she's an amazing artist.

"I joined a band to have a riot. I didn't join a band to make money. I didn't join a band to be famous."

Is this the last Garbage record? If there's one thing I have learned, it's not to make sweeping statements about whether I will or will not do something in the future.

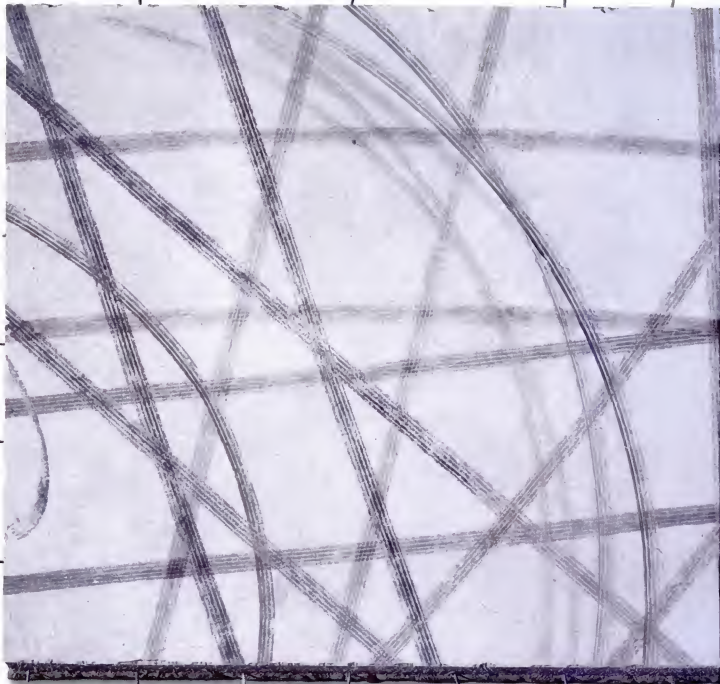
You haven't had to answer all these annoying questions since Garbage's previous record came out in 2001. Actually, we never did this kind of [interview] for the last record. We were in Europe at an MTV studio two days after September 11, and it was just ludicrous. That was one of the many pitfalls we ran into, to say nothing of the fact that our drummer [Vig] almost died of hepatitis, and I almost lost my ability to sing. I got a cyst on my vocal chord. We were headlining the Roskilde Festival in Denmark, and I got onstage and opened my mouth to sing, and about 30 seconds in, there was no voice at all. It was a fucking nightmare.

Were you scared you wouldn't perform again? I definitely had moments of complete terror. For maybe the first time in my life I had to think like an optimist. The worst part is undergoing the surgery, and then you can't speak for an entire week. It was un-fucking-believable.

Have you seriously considered going solo? Oh, absolutely. I thought about it often when I would go into the studio, and it was just so awful. And you begin to question why you're in a band in the first place—because I joined a band to have a riot. I didn't join a band to make money. I didn't join a band to be famous. I totally flirted in my fantasy life of doing something alone. But I've been in bands since I was 15 years old, and I love it.

What's changed the most for you during the past 11 years you've been in Garbage? The notion of having success changes what you truly seek out in your life. It changes you, that discovery that success is just a day, and I'm still the same old crappy person at the end of it. When I take off all the makeup, I'm just the same old Shirley Ann, straight out of Edinburgh, Scotland.

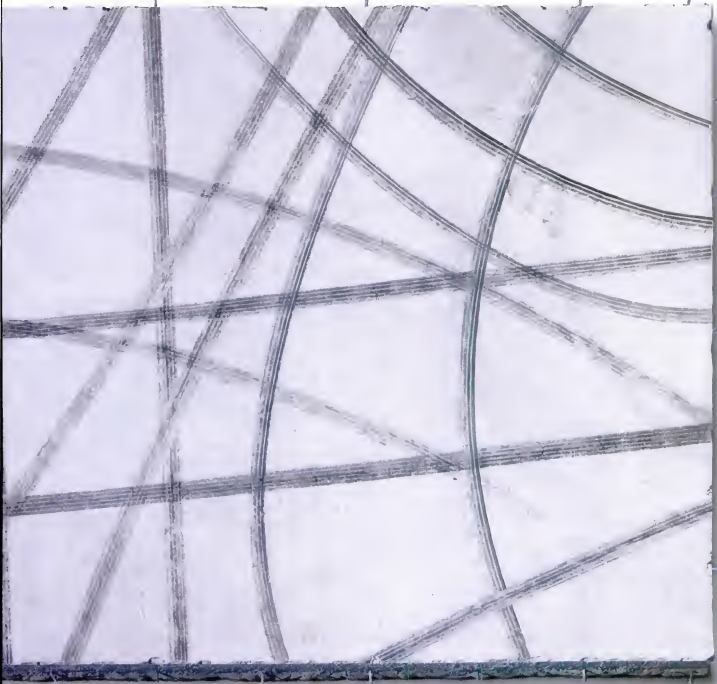
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1.21.05

...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead

Rothko
New York City

If conflict generates the most compelling art, then ...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead, a band creatively at war with itself (and, famously, its audience), might be the most fascinating act in rock'n'roll. They are best known not for their punky, psychedelic prog rock, but for the mayhem that concludes most of their performances. During October's CMJ festival, the Austin six-piece detonated the Bowery Ballroom, leaving behind mangled instruments and lakes of beer. But by the final song at this far mellow fan-appreciation show at Rothko (tickets came with preordered CDs from three local stores), drummer/vocalist Jason Reece was begging the audience to do anything: "When we used to play New York, you guys used to throw stuff at us, and it was fun. Throw something at us!"

With drummer Doni Schroeder hobbled by food poisoning and singer/guitarist/drummer Conrad Keely suffering a chest infection, Trail of Dead played a milder set that still vibrated with their dark blend of crushing drums, atmospheric keyboards, and stinging guitars. The rare lack of pelting peeled away a layer of their stage show, revealing the contrasting personalities of the two frontmen: the confrontational Reece and the calmer, more melodic Keely. The tone of the set flipped, with Keely sweetly whining the wistful, Bowie-esque "All White," while Reece shrieked and jerked to the defiant "Caterwaul." Together, they pounded out songs from their latest, *Worlds Apart*—like the thrashy head-trip "Will You Smile Again for Me" and "Classic Art Showcase," an anti-media musing that twisted itself into a mesmerizing cacophony (giving Keely an opportunity to semi-ironically break out a double-necked axe). By the night's end, the band had displayed another dramatic dichotomy: their impulse to make noncommercial, experimental music for the



"I could smash my guitar, but I'd rather tell jokes": Keely



Only one of these men is suffering from food poisoning: Reece and Schroeder



major-label empire that Eminem, No Doubt, and Weezer call home.

"We'd like to thank Interscope for putting out this record," Keely half-joked. "We don't know who was in charge of that decision. We think you're crazy." Posing in front of a timpani, he delivered eerie warnings like "Remember all the bad dreams are not far from reality" over a hypnotically circular guitar riff, as though the world could collapse at any minute. But for once, there was no need for the audience or the band to duck and cover. Grandly strumming along to the tight, machine-gun drums of "And the Rest Will Follow," Keely rode a swelling crescendo to the show's fierce finale, "Mistakes and Regrets," without as much as a flying water bottle cracking the surface of the band's natural tension. CARYN GANZ



Touch me, I'm sick: Blilie leans in to make sure his young crowd is playing nicely

2.24.05

The Blood Brothers

Trees
Dallas

Seattle bands have a history at Trees. This is the club where Kurt Cobain cracked the soundboard (and a bouncer's head) with his guitar before escaping into a cab. But the Blood Brothers' all-ages audience likely knew little of this, and these hardcore saviors seemed uninterested in causing any real bloodshed. After a knives-out version of "Trash Flavored Trash" (off last year's shotgun wedding of Black Flag and Tom Waits, *Crimes*), singer Jordan Blilie warned the room's assortment of Seths and Summers, "Let's all be careful," while the song threatened to scare the khakis off the parents sipping beers upstairs.

The crowd-surfing started before the Brothers hit the first chorus, but Blilie's and Johnny Whitney's vocal chords suffered the most damage. The duo spent the night screaming punk from anthems like the piano-cripping "Peacock Skeleton With Crooked Feathers," the smoldering "Feed Me to the Forest," and "Rats and Rats for Candy," the best song ever about 15 rats living inside a woman's body and the man who sort of loves them. Although they might've been listening to Dashboard Confessional a year ago, the kids squealed along with their new Pied Pipers, who happened to look just like everyone there. "You are true Texas friends," Whitney said before ending the set with the chaotic "Love Rhymes With Hideous Car Wreck." He's right: No one had to flee in a taxi that night. ZAC CRAIN

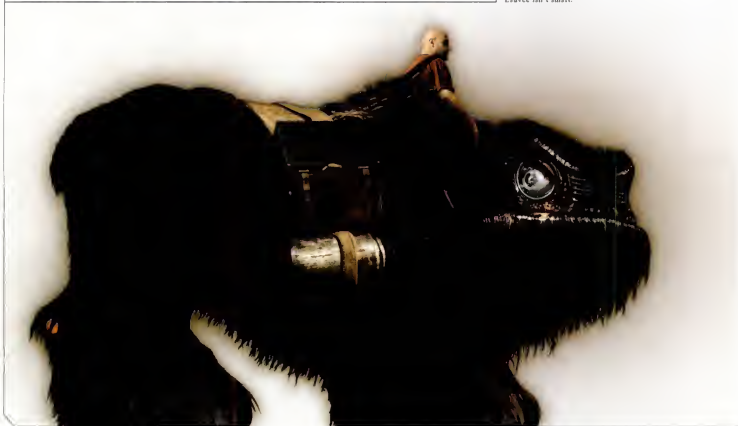
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Heineken Green Carpet Party

Music Box Theater, Los Angeles, 02.12.06



Spin and its sister magazine, Vibe, partnered with Heineken the night before the 2005 Grammys® to throw the Heineken Green Carpet Party, featuring a stellar performance by the Grammy® Award winning Wyclef Jean. Heineken flowed freely all night, and the wild crowd got even wilder when India.Arie joined Wyclef onstage for a surprise guest appearance. Thanks to PF Flyers, which also sponsored the event.

(1) Partygoers, (2) Wendy Wong of Warner Bros. Home Entertainment with Ashley Holmes of Grey Entertainment, (3) Spin's Durkin Guthrie and Heather Child, (4) Wyclef Jean performs, (5) India.Arie performs, (6) the audience phones home.



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PLUG Independent Music Awards

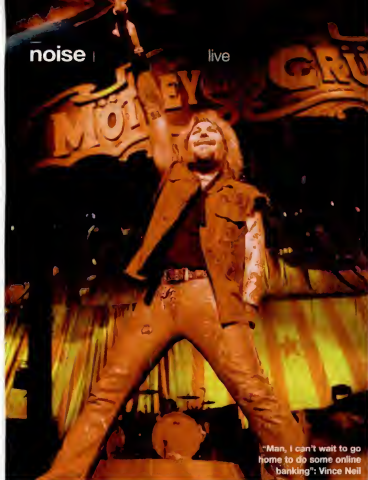
Webster Hall, New York, 02.09.05



Spin was a sponsor of the inaugural PLUG Independent Music Awards, established to celebrate the best of the indie scene, because "it ain't about the scans or the scilla, it's about the music." Webster Hall rocked throughout the evening to the sounds of RJD2, Saul Williams, Aesop Rock, Ted Leo and the Pharmacists, and the Dillinger Escape Plan. Following the event, Spin hosted the official after-party at downtown hotspot Rothko.

(1) The Dillinger Escape Plan, (2) RJD2 performs, (3) Saul Williams, (4) Ted Leo, (5) Saul Williams and Astralkwerks recording artist Joi in the dressing room, (6) Aesop Rock performs, (7) Ted Leo and a sea of fans.





"Man, I can't wait to go home to do some online banking": Vince Neil

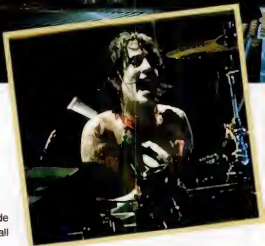


"We shred!": Nikki Sixx and Mick Mars; Tommy Lee (below)

M. Crüe Catalog

Dwarves! Boobs! Devil horns! A guide to the flash and flesh onstage (and off) at Mötley Crüe's opening night. *By Sia Michel*

On February 17, Mötley Crüe kicked off their *Red, White & Crüe: Better Live Than Dead* reunion tour at the sold-out Office Depot Center in Sunrise, Florida. Why reunite, when Vince Neil and Tommy Lee despise each other so much they barely speak? "A lot of motherfuckers said we'd never come back," Nikki Sixx told the crowd. "You know why we're here? Because you guys made us get off our asses and rock you again!" Plus, Neil has a new face-lift to show off. Here's how it all went down, from the heavy-metal parking lot to the backstage after-party.



THE PARKING LOT

Number of thirtysomething "biggest Crüe fans ever" packed into a single SUV limo: 7

How they spent the day prepping for the show:

Racing their old Camaros and Mustangs, drinking beer, and blasting *Theatre of Pain*

Best quote: "We went from hair

bands to lack-of-hair bands!"

Existentialist dilemma: "Four of us are wearing collared shirts—what happened to us, man?"

Number who claimed to own "every Crüe album": 7

Number who bought the new album, *Red, White & Crüe*: 1
Number who bought Tommy Lee's *Methods of Mayhem* album: 0

Why the Crüe reunion is an important historical event:

"It's the return of fucking metal! Woool! Metal was fun. Grunge and rap depress people!"

Standard outfit, male: Vintage Crüe T-shirt with amputated sleeves, baggy jeans, faded pentagram tattoo

Standard outfit, female: Deep, carcinoma-causing tan,

cleavage-baring tank top, miniskirt, stiletto boots

Number of mother-daughter duos in the area: At least 4
Number of daughters who complained, "Mom, stop it, you're embarrassing me!": 1

What her mom was doing: Throwing a devil horn while flashing her breasts at a passing car



THE SHOW

What the stage set was designed to look like: A big-top circus

What played on the giant video screens: A slide show of circus freaks, including wolf men, two-headed babies, and four-breasted women

First song: "Shout at the Devil"

Extras onstage: A unicycle-riding dwarf in a killer clown costume, fire-eating pole dancers

How bassist Nikki Sixx introduced "Ten Seconds to Love": "This is a nice, dirty, fucking sleazy love song for you fuckers!"

Song that inspired the most headbanging from the audience: "Looks That Kill"

Number of women in the VIP area who engaged in a lascivious group tongue-kiss every time an '80s hit was performed: 3



What played on the Jumbotrons during the second half of the show: Videos of wild animals

Number of seconds it took a pack of hyenas to disembowel a gazelle: 4

Song that generated the loudest sing-along: "Home Sweet Home"

Did Vince Neil sit on a stool, alone

under a spotlight, as he sang it? Of course.

Neil's most embarrassing moment: Slipping with a loud "Oops!" then regaining his cool by chugging a beer

Number of Remaking Vince Neil surgery scars visible from the stage: 0

Biggest trooper in the band: Guitarist Mick Mars, who, despite suffering from bone-fusing ankylosing spondylitis, managed to shred for two and a half hours

Crüe member with the biggest dick, according to Sixx: Mars!

What Tommy Lee did for his drum solo: Flew back and forth between two drum kits while strapped into a wire harness

Did it totally kick ass? No. Playing upside down in a cage in 1987—that kicked ass.

Number of women who nuzzled each other's bare breasts when Sixx broke out the "titty cam": At least 6

The Crüe philosophy: "We fight, we fuck, we do drugs—that's rock'n'roll. We're knocking our dicks in the dirt!"

What "knocking our dicks in the dirt" means: We have no fucking clue.

Response to the new song



"If I Die Tomorrow": Polite Response to a cover of the Beatles' "Heiter Skelter": Crazed Special treat during "Girls, Girls, Girls": Vince, Tommy, Nikki, and the dwarf rode choppers onstage. Did they play the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the U.K." as an encore, like they did on the '99 reunion tour? Yes, but this time there were dancing girls striking fire sticks on their booties and breathing flames. Would Sid Vicious have approved? Probably.

BACKSTAGE

Color of the VIP passes doled out to hot chicks: Pink

Nicknames for the pink passes: "Ass passes," "pussy passes," "BJ passes"

What happily married father-of-five Nikki Sixx told the pink-pass posse as they tried to enter his dressing room: "Get them out of here! I'm busy!"

What he was "busy" doing: Sitting alone on a couch, contemplating the removal of his eye makeup

Strangest thing on Sixx's dell tray: A trussed Cornish game hen

Number of pink-passers in Tommy Lee's dressing room: 15



What he said when they arrived: "Yeeeeeeaaaah!" Number who worked at Hooters: 2

Number of takers when a woman bruised from an "awesome" sexual encounter asked everyone to give her more bruises as she leaned against a wall with her skirt hiked up to reveal

an orange G-string: 0

Number of takers when she flopped down on the floor and announced that she needed a therapeutic butt massage before she could sit in the limo for the 30-minute ride to Miami: 1, a pink-passer who claimed to be a physical therapist

What Lee worried about during the "butt massage incident": If his drum solo was wack

Number of years it would take Lia Gerardini, Neil's wife, to grow her overplucked eye-



eyebrow groomer: 4 What bored journalists did on Sixx's apparently alcohol-, drug-, and groupie-free tour bus: Ate all the blue M&M's out of his crystal candy dish So no one injected Jack Daniel's into a vein, died for three minutes, or threw an orgy in a pink bubble bath? Unfortunately, no, but there were still 113 shows to go.



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Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13



The Records That Changed My Life

Corin Tucker of Sleater-Kinney

By Phoebe Reilly

Corin Tucker describes Sleater-Kinney's seventh album, *The Woods*, as "almost survivalist, because we feel somewhat desperate in this political and cultural climate." Tucker's sense that music should be intensely personal and immediate has influenced the records the 32-year-old singer/guitarist has made, as well as the ones she's listened to since she was a kid in Eugene, Oregon, sharing her dad's love for R.E.M. "Songs are not just supposed to be cerebral; they're also emotional," she says. "I'm inspired by depth of songwriting."

THE WIZARD OF OZ, ORIGINAL SOUND-TRACK (MCA, 1940) "I had a record player when I was little, so I must have just played this album over and over. Children are naturally drawn to things that are both dark and light, and those songs are really dark. The imagery for a little kid—you know, 'Ding dong, the witch is dead?' That would just not fly anymore. I have a four-year-old son, and children's music today is so vanilla, I can't stand it."

PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION PURPLE RAIN (Warner Bros., 1984) "When I was in seventh grade, we were allowed to play cassette tapes during breaks between classes. I hung out with a small group of weirdos, and one day we got 'Darling Nikki' played over the PA system, and we thought there was going to be total anarchy. Prince was so anti doing things in a scripted way. You knew he was ready to completely tear down the music industry. He wanted to be holier than thou. And it felt kind of dangerous."

R.E.M. LIVES RICH PAGEANT (IRS, 1986) "This is embarrassing, but I had really long hair with extremely short bangs as a freshman and a denim jacket on which I hand-lettered R.E.M., because I felt that their message really needed to be delivered. In the '80s all those metal bands were about getting laid and getting rich, and it was really depressing as a teenage girl to see that. So to have this band that was talking about the environment and seemed to care about the world—that meant something to me. Then, unfortunately, they got too popular, and the jocks at my school started liking them, so I had to stop."



SINÉAD O'CONNOR THE LION AND THE COBRA (Ensign/Chrysalis, 1987) "Oh my God, I wanted to be Sinéad so bad. I was a sophomore in high school, writing bad poetry, and I would stand in my room and just scream my head off trying to sing like her and driving my family insane."

SONIC YOUTH SISTER (SST/Blast First, 1987) "Sonic Youth made me think that being a musician was the coolest job ever. Kim [Gordon] and Thurston [Moore] take turns singing, Lee [Ranaldo] and Thurston take turns on the guitar. I like that collective spirit; it was a good role model for us."

PUBLIC ENEMY FEAR OF A BLACK PLANET (Def Jam, 1990) "The first time I heard it, I was in college, and I remember the hair on the back of my neck stood up. I bought it on cassette so I could listen to it on my Walkman undisturbed. I grew up in white suburbia, and even though Eugene is very liberal, this was a wake-up call to this other reality. It made me think, which is something I'm much more drawn to in music."

BIKINI KILL PUSSY WHIPPED (Kill Rock Stars, 1993) "I moved to Olympia when riot grrrl was just starting, and Bikini Kill were such a great band to see live that I started a band and made up a name [Heavens to Betsy], and then they

were like, 'Okay, you want to play a show?' and I thought, 'Crap, now I have to learn to write songs and play guitar.' They really made me put my money where my mouth is."

THE SLITS CUT (Island, 1979) "When I go on tour, I can really work on my record collecting. During the tour for *Dig Me Out*, we were in England, and I went looking for the Raincoats, Dolly Mixture, and all that great British girl-punk stuff. But that Slits cover where all three of them are naked with mud smeared on them? Wow. I liked that they could do that and be fierce at the same time. And songs like 'Typical Girls' and 'Newtown' told little stories from a girl's point of view, which was something you didn't get from other punk bands."

WILCO YANKEE HOTEL FOXTROT (Nonesuch, 2002) "We listened to that, like, every day during the *One Beat* tour. We have really different tastes in music, but we all love that record. Jeff Tweedy is reaching really deep and is doing something that is not always so pretty or light or fun and is more about trying to describe his world. There's a part of us that can easily write a song to entertain people, but you have to be able to hit upon something that gives them more than just that moment of entertainment. That's something we work toward. I don't know if we've gotten there, but we try."

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Alternative (Rock) Medicine

Green Day help a coma victim come around

They've sold 20 million records, won two Grammys, and now Green Day can add "punk medics" to their résumé, after a nine-year-old Welsh boy named Corey George awoke from a two-week coma an hour after hearing Green Day's *American Idiot* album.

Corey, who was struck by a car on his birthday, "loves Green Day and is always playing their records," his father told the BBC. "The title track we played is his favorite—he listens to it all the time." When word of the boy's recovery reached the band, who were touring in Japan, they fired off a get-well message, complete with Green Day CDs and T-shirts. But this isn't the first time the Top 40



Punk rock can save your life: Green Day and Corey George

has rescued an unconscious listener. Canadian pop singer Fefe Dobson once claimed her music revived a fan from a coma, and Christiane Kittel famously emerged from seven comatose years when her family brought her to a Bryan Adams show in Germany. Reports of Green Day's *Nimrod* album curing erectile dysfunction remain unconfirmed. DAVE ALEXANDER



WHO'S BEEN ARRESTED NOW?

Kid Rock



he had time to sober up. Later, he was pulled over by a campus officer at Vanderbilt University, who opted to ask Rock for an autograph rather than question him about the alcohol on his breath (the cop was later fired). Rock was finally located and arrested at the apartment where he was staying, and was released on \$3,000 bail later that day, still in high spirits. "Everything is wonderful," Rock said as he returned to freedom. "It was a beautiful night." KYLE ANDERSON

In an evening as bizarre as it was ultimately tame, Kid Rock (né Robert Ritchie) was arrested on February 16 and charged with simple assault after delivering two punches to the eye of a Nashville strip-club DJ named Jeremy Campos. Despite early reports, the scuffle was not over choice of music. Campos allegedly got into a shouting match with one of Rock's friends at Christie's Cabaret, and after demanding an apology, Rock punched Campos twice, breaking his glasses and leaving a welt. Rock and his crew proceeded to a second strip joint, where the urban cowboy evaded cops by sneaking out the backdoor, apparently so

On the Tour Bus



WHAT **KINGS OF LEON** ARE LISTENING TO:

The Arcade Fire, Funeral (Merge)

Secret Machines, Now Here Is

Nowhere (Response)

The Stills, Logic Will Break Your Heart (Vice)

Tegan and Sara, So Jealous (Vapor/Sanctuary)

The Features, Exhibit A (Cherry/Universal)

HEAVY ROTATION

WHAT'S BLASTING THROUGH THE SPIN OFFICES THIS MONTH

The Rub

It's the *Motherfucking Remix* (tetherub.com) This Brooklyn remix crew—Diplo, DJ Ayres, others—tweak the ambience and bump of rap tracks from Joe Budden to Nice & Smooth. But they earn their keep by artfully tossing rock into the hopper (the Breeders' "Cannonball") without coming off like dorks. (Charles Aaron, music editor)

Kathleen Edwards

Back to Me (Zoe/Rounder) Edwards has finally stolen the crown for "most depressing alt-country lyricist" from foremothers Lucinda Williams and Gillian Welch. But even when she sings about a lover facing 20 years in the pen, her bourbon-purr promises she'll visit him. (Ellen Carpenter, research editor)

Danko Jones

We Sweat Blood (Razor & Tie) Big-riffing, Aerosmith-quoting stalker anthems by manic Toronto Neanderthals whose one girl-power tune lovingly instructs a fine babe to turn the streets into her catwalk. Mean, dopey, and, man, does this swing. (Doug Brod, executive editor)

John Prine

Fair and Square (Oh Boy) Prine's voice is shot (due to neck cancer), but he's still one of the witliest, sweetest American songwriters ever. "Some Humans Ain't Human" is the best postelection song yet. (Jon Dolan, senior associate editor)

The Deaths

Choir Invisible (gochoirnygo.com) If John Lennon made Plastic Ono Band without meeting Yoko, the result would have been akin to these minimalist, psychedelic reactionaries who sing about places they've never been and experiences they've never had. (Chuck Klesterman, senior writer)

Patrick Wolf

Wind in the Willows (Tornabit) What the electro Bright Eyes album should have sounded like: Wolf mixes wailing strings and synth beats with his pie-in-the-sky vocals to conjure the gentle melancholy of the day after a funeral. (Kyle Anderson, editorial assistant)

The Capitol Years

Let Them Drink (Burn & Shiver) This Philly quartet grinds out retro rock with a propulsive, fuzzy jangle and plumb harmonies. Standout track: "Everyone is a Skunk," a wailing, bopping ode to egomania. (Caryn Ganz, associate editor)

The Others

The Others (Pooptone/Mercury Import) This quartet writes Britain's underprivileged proles with loud, gritty tales about drug abuse and sexual frustration. The gloves come off when they throw a punch up the bracket. (Peter Gaston, mobile editor and producer)



Danko Jones



Now Dirty Boys Get Clean.
NEW AXE SHOWER GEL





Like rainbows, Fall Out Boy are hard on the outside...candy-filled on the inside. Patrick Stump, Joe Trohman, Pete Wentz, and Andy Hurley

Fall Out Boy

Who: Four college dropouts from Chicago with an appreciation of *Dirty Dancing* (sample song title: "Nobody Puts Baby in a Corner") and emo-punk humility to spare. In 2000 these vets of various hardcore outfits bonded over their love of all things sensitive, fled the hoodie-and-tats scene, and started playing shows—at home. "For people who didn't do drugs, we had the most awesome party apartment ever. We'd get a keg of root beer," bassist/lyricist Pete Wentz says. "We're like the marijuana of hardcore bands—a gateway drug."

Sound like: Dashboard Confessional if Chris Carrabba spent his days chugging Orange Julius at the food court. Their major-label debut, *From Under the Cork Tree* (Island), wraps prom-night melodrama and pep-rally goofiness in punky yelps and Pop Rocks-and-cola guitars.

D'oh: Yes, their name references Radioactive Man's shrimpier sidekick on *The Simpsons*. And yes, Wentz regrets accepting that suggestion (courtesy of a fan at their first gig). "I think, on the scale of bad band names, we rank

By James Montgomery
Photograph by Saverio Truglia

somewhere below Guns N' Roses but a little bit above Megadeth," he says. "But I don't want to fuck with Dave Mustaine."

One-hit wonder: While Fall Out Boy have rocked an audience of one in Texas and 5,000 screaming fans a night on last summer's Warped Tour, they've also shared the stage with Tommy Tutone of "867-5309/Jenny" fame. "It was insane," says Wentz. "The dude was, like, my dad's age, had a Heineken in one hand and two girls under his arms. We learned a lot from Tommy Tutone."

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REMIX

Four indie rockers and a carry: Bobby Drake, Tad Kubler, Craig Finn, Franz Nicolay, and Gaelen Polivka



The Hold Steady

As the leader of late-'90s Minneapolis post-punks Lifter Puller, singer/guitarist Craig Finn chronicled deadbeat nightclub owners and drug-mad ravers, creating a fictional netherworld that garnered fans as obsessive as D&D conventioners (one tattooed LIFTER PLLR on his knuckles). The band dissolved in 2000 but generated fierce posthumous word of mouth. "I started to get a lot of e-mails," says Finn from his Brooklyn home. "Like, 'Why did you guys break up? You're my favorite band now.'"

Enter the Hold Steady, which Finn formed with fellow ex-Lifter Tad Kubler in 2003. On last year's *Almost Killed Me* and the new *Separation Sunday* (Frenchkiss), the spazzy, detail-heavy lyrical style that Finn trademarked with his previous band remains intact. (From *Sunday*'s "Stevie Nix": "She said, 'You remind me of Rod Stewart when he was young / You've got passion, you think that you're sexy, and all the punks think that you're dumb.'") Now Finn's hoarse holler sits atop a fat barroom stomp

By Michaelangelo Matos

that, thanks to keyboardist Franz Nicolay, recalls the Band and pre-arena Springsteen.

Sunday is an album-length narrative about a prodigal daughter named Hallelujah, who, like Finn, is a Catholic from Minneapolis. But Finn insists the story is far from autobiographical. "It's pulled from pieces of things, stories and whatever, molded into characters," he says. "I have a hard time setting anything anywhere that's too detailed. 'Ybor City' is fun to say, but I've never been there."

More New Music to Hear Now By Jon Dolan

Dr. Dog *Easybeat*

(National Parking)

Philadelphia's psychedellic tradition extends from Bardo Pond to Sun Ra, and Dr. Dog add a swampy Impermeability and "White Album" fixation to that signature sound. Their tunes stumble from the speakers, taking their time replicating John, Paul, George, and even bloody Ringo within a single chorus.

Magnolia Electric Company *What Comes After the Blues*

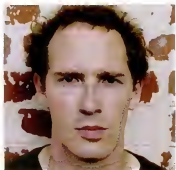
(Secretly Canadian)

Jason Molina first got noticed because his inbred-chic balladeer schtick was more depressing than Will Oldham's. Here, he finds his voice, reimagining the Neil Young of *On the Beach* as a Pentecostal farm wife, slathering mountains of rustified guitar noise over genuinely afflicted backwoods dread.

Caribou *The Milk of Human Kindness*

(Domino)

Dan Snaith made utterly delectable electronic dream-pop as Manitoba. But a rather dickish lawsuit brought by '70s punker Handsome Dick Manitoba forced a name change to Caribou. Undeterred, Snaith crafts his shy lo-fi moodscape in the margins of the Stereolab entry in the *Encyclopedia Bliptannica*.



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Interstellar, Overtired

On *The Office*, all Martin Freeman wanted was some personal space. In *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, he's getting about 100,000 light-years of it.

By Diane Vadino

Photograph by Pat Pope

There are few stars who could handle the transition from a part on a 12-episode British sitcom to the lead role in an \$80 million Hollywood movie, and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* star Martin Freeman, who played long-suffering paper salesman Tim Canterbury on *The Office*, is pretty sure he isn't one of them. "I desperately want the movie to do well, and I know it behooves us to talk about it well, but I trained as an actor, not a PR man," he says. "I'm expecting lots



Guess who's the Earthing?
Hitchhiker's Freeman
(center) with Mos Def
(left) and Sam
Rockwell (right)

of questions like "What do you think Tim would make of outer space?"

The 33-year-old Londoner forgives fans who can't let go of *The Office*, the celebrated, shame-fisted BBC comedy that closed up shop after just two seasons. "If in decades to come it's the only thing people know me for, I'll have fucked up somehow," Freeman says. "But if people like it, that's great, because I love it." Though much of the show's screen time went to his cocreator, Ricky Gervais, who played break-dancing, delusional boss David Brent, Freeman was the program's hero and beating heart, whether he was quietly pining for the engaged receptionist or encasing a coworker's stapler in Jell-O.

The actor finally earns top billing in *Hitchhiker's*, the long-awaited adaptation of the late Douglas Adams' best-selling sci-fi satire. Freeman plays Arthur Dent, an Earthing who survives planetary demolition by a wrecking crew making room for a new intergalactic highway; he's saved at the last minute by Ford Prefect, an incognito alien portrayed by noted workaholic Mos Def. "I used to call him 'Coma Mos,' because he had a hard time staying awake on the set," says Freeman. "He would kind of hibernate if given a two-minute window."

Raised in the London suburb of Teddington, Freeman dropped out of drama school to pursue paying work, including an early commercial for a product called Super Noodles. ("They're good drunk food when you need something right away," he explains.) He met Gervais in 1999 on a BBC sketch-comedy show called *Bruiser*; *The Office* followed, as did a small part in 2003's *Love Actually*, in which he played a porn movie stand-in who romances his costar while miming sex acts. Though the increased visibility hasn't radically altered his life (his official website still features a photo of a "rather fine veggie fry-up" he once cooked), he's always watching for intrusions from the relentless British press, which doesn't seem to know the difference between cult icons and genuine A-listers. "There are people who feed the machine—who for a long, long time have been running their own little industries of their personalities, and they're willing to let you see their tits," Freeman says. "I've said to paparazzi, 'I'm about to have coffee with my brother. Please go away.'"



The only job in the world that's worse than yours: Freeman pushes paper in *The Office*

When *Hitchhiker's* opens on April 29 (around the same time the NBC remake of *The Office* should be going off the air), Freeman knows the movie will guarantee him a career portraying befuddled Brits trapped in worlds they can't understand. "People say, 'You're good at playing losers,'" he says. "But I want to see vulnerable people in a bit of a scrape sometime, people who are victims of circumstance, like we all are." Yet, unlike the hapless characters he's perfected, Freeman is in no hurry to give up the comfortable rut he's dug. "I'm not going to play James Bond. Who wants to play some cunt on a yacht?"

Space Cadets

Thumbnail portraits of the way-out travelers who wander *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*



The hero of Douglas Adams' five *Hitchhiker's Guide* novels, **Arthur Dent** (Martin Freeman), begins his adventures by protesting the bulldozing of his home by construction workers, only to be interrupted by the destruction of Earth by extraterrestrials. But when his friend turns out to be an alien too, Dent is rescued from the agony of living in England for just five more minutes.



Taking his name from a boxlike car later exported to the U.S., alien **Ford Prefect** (Mos Def) has lived quietly on our planet for 15 years as an out-of-work actor. Alerted to its annihilation, Prefect leaves Earth with the bare essentials needed for star-trekking: three pints of beer (in his belly) and a towel.



President of the Imperial Galactic Government **Zaphod Beeblebrox** (Sam Rockwell) is a true political freak, with three arms and two heads.

When he meets up with Prefect and Dent, he's just stolen the galaxy's fastest spaceship, thus proving that gross malefance is no impediment to holding elected office.



Space vixen **Trillian** (Zooey Deschanel), née Tricia McMillan, and her two white mice are the only other living things to have survived Earth's

demise. An astrophysicist and mathematician, she chose a career in celestial exploration over the unemployment line.



Before Radiohead recorded "Paranoid Android," there was **Marvin the Robot** (voiced by Alan Rickman), an automaton with a tendency to get depressed. *Hitchhiker's* fans love him, despite his moodiness and the fact that his name is an anagram of "abhorrent vomit." D.V.



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May

05

Everything else you need to do, see, hear, and decapitate this month

03

He's the Godfather of Soul, the man who made R&B a sensation with white and black audiences alike, and on his birthday, he feels good: Engelbert Humperdinck turns 69. (Also born today: James Brown.)



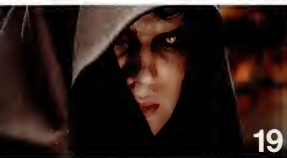
06



Already world-renowned for her work as an indie-film star, **Paris Hilton** takes a stab at mainstream fare in the remake of the horror classic *House of Wax*. Unlike the original Vincent Price movie, the updated version won't be in 3-D, denying audiences the chance to see if Paris exists in more than two dimensions.

08

Velvet Goldmine's **Jonathan Rhys-Meyers** plays the ultimate American rocker in the CBS miniseries *Elvis*, almost certainly the first biopic in which the King is portrayed by an ambisexually appealing Irish actor. Next month: Colin Farrell stars in *The Johnny Cash Story*.



19

Anakin Skywalker becomes Darth Vader, George Lucas becomes an even richer billionaire, and the last remaining *Star Wars* fans become totally disenchanted with Hollywood as *Star Wars—Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* opens in theaters.



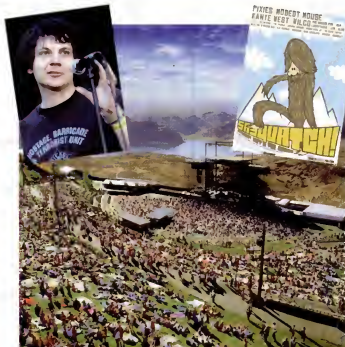
20

magazine as "Miracle Mike, the **Headless Rooster**." Six decades later, his unlikely survival is honored at Fruita's **Mike the Headless Chicken Festival**, thus proving that Americans will attend anything that features a car show and a community chicken dance.

True story: In 1945 a Fruita, Colorado farmer attempted to cut off a chicken's head, missing the brain stem so badly that the bird's headless body lived another 18 months. During this time, the undead piece of poultry toured the country and was recognized in *Life*

24

Back before Dave Foley hosted celebrity poker tournaments for a living, Joe Rogan fed cockroach soap to cheerleaders, and Andy Dick was a cokehead, their combined talents made *NewsRadio* the most cynically devastating workplace comedy of all time. Honor the memories of their once-promising careers (plus the legacy of the late Phil Hartman) as *NewsRadio's* first two seasons debut on DVD.



28

Though biologists still cannot confirm or deny the existence of Bigfoot, they do agree that the North American legend is almost certainly a huge fan of indie rock. That's a good thing, because the **Sasquatch! Festival** begins today in George, Washington, featuring performances by the Pixies, Modest Mouse, Wilco, and the Arcade Fire—and, who knows, maybe even an appearance from the big guy himself. (He'll be the nine-foot-tall beast in the Bloc Party T-shirt.)

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Also, John Lithgow turned him on to *Black Flag: Mysterious Skin's* Gordon-Levitt

Uncomfortably Close Encounters

No longer a sitcom alien, Joseph Gordon-Levitt falls to Earth as a gay hustler in *Mysterious Skin*

By Phoebe Reilly

Photograph by Emily Shur

PLANET OF SOUND

While many former child stars are desperate to leave their professional pasts behind, Joseph Gordon-Levitt has mostly happy memories of his time growing up in public. "French Stewart turned me on to the Pixies," says the 24-year-old actor of his erstwhile costar on TV's *3rd Rock From the Sun*. "Who else was going to do that?" But when the sitcom ended in 2001, the Los Angeles native ditched the acting career he had been building since the age of six to study at Columbia. Still, Gordon-Levitt doesn't feel completely alienated from his previous work, whether it's the Shakespearean satire *10 Things I Hate About You* or his Disney movies. "The last time I watched *Angels in the Outfield*, I cried," he says. "Hey, that movie gets really sad!"

MIDNIGHT FARMBOY

If you'd prefer to remember Gordon-Levitt as a cherubic youngster, you may want to take a pass on his new movie, *Mysterious Skin*. In the latest tale of disturbing young-adult behavior from director Gregg Araki (*The Doom Generation*), Gordon-Levitt stars as a male prostitute and sexual abuse survivor stuck in small-town Kansas. Though the film frequently called for him to get naked (but never for very long: "We had so little money that we had to get it right every time," he says), he was flattered to be offered the role. "In the past I've always played the smart one or the nice one or the funny one," he says. "Gregg was really the first director to point at me and say, 'I want you to play the sexy one.' It's always cool when someone says that to you."

CLOAK AND DAGGARRR

Sadly, Gordon-Levitt's pinup status is to be short-lived: In this year's Sundance favorite *Brick*, he plays a nerdy, fast-talking high school sleuth trying to solve the murder of his ex-girlfriend. Though his character is meant to be a Sam Spade-style-gumshoe, Gordon-Levitt compares him with Johnny Depp's hero in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. "He's kind of a good guy, and you're pretty much rooting for him," he says, "but some of his methodology is a little suspect." And if it's the last time he's asked to play a teenager, Gordon-Levitt won't be disappointed. "I celebrate getting older every day," he says. "My girlfriend just made me a chocolate pecan pie. It was adorable—very heavy on the chocolate."

"Fair Enough!"



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He Ain't My Brother, He's Heavy

Family Guy's Seth MacFarlane and his cartoon id, Peter Griffin, may not be identical twins, but they're still cell mates

By Dave Iltzkoff

Illustration by Julius Preite

Though Seth MacFarlane is the creator of and the voice behind Peter Griffin, the lovable lumox of his hit cartoon sitcom, *Family Guy*, the 31-year-old animator would like to make it clear that they're two distinct people. (For one thing, MacFarlane cannot play a beautiful piano rendition of the *Incredible Hulk* theme song when he gets drunk.) As *Family Guy* makes its long-awaited return to Fox on May 1 (three years after the network canceled the series for a second time), we brought the beta males together for a highly animated conversation.

How much of the Peter Griffin character comes from you, Seth?

Seth MacFarlane: Not a whole lot, actually. He's kind of a melting pot of all the guys I was surrounded by growing up—good-natured, big-hearted guys who had no sense of tact, but who meant well.

Peter Griffin: I come from a great tradition of overweight sitcom husbands who fart a lot and inexplicably have hot, bisexual wives.

How did you spend your time off during *Family Guy's* "hiatus"?

SM: I cowrote a sitcom pilot for Fox, called *Simon*, but it didn't get shot. They decided they wanted to stick to destroying emotionally fragile people on *American Idol*.

PG: I worked on my poetry, studied the Kabbalah, went to the Galápagos, and swam with some really incredible giant turtles....Nah, I'm just yankin' your chain. I sat on my ass and watched *Spies Like Us* about a million times.

You've used *Family Guy* to pay homage to some endearingly bad and just plain awful TV series. Is there one that stands out in your mind as the absolute worst?

SM: *Space: 1999* may get my vote as the worst TV series of all time. I bought the DVDs, but if you're not smoking pot, which I wasn't, you can't really enjoy it. I'm a big fan of Martin Landau. He's a fantastic Bela Lugosi [in *Ed Wood*], wonderful in *Crimes*



and *Misdemeanors*, just not an action hero.

PG: Normally, I love shows about talking animals, but I could never get into *Sex and the City*.

Do you still feel that there's bad blood between you and the producers of *The Simpsons*?

SM: I was at the Aspen comedy festival, and Matt Groening came up to me and said very sincerely that he wanted to dispel any misconceptions that *The Simpsons* had some kind of beef with us. I mean, we're not Tiffany and Debbie Gibson. Who are the kids listening to nowadays? We're not Billy Ocean and Rick Astley.

PG: Actually, at that same party, Homer Simpson came up to me, and we had a very similar conversation. Then we gave George Jetson a wedgie and stole his briefcase car.

You were scheduled to fly in one of the planes that crashed on 9/11, but you wound up missing your flight—did that experience change you in any way?

SM: I'm not a particularly religious person, as you may have guessed. Close calls, I imagine, happen far more often than we would like to know about. I sent my travel agent a huge basket of flowers and a bottle of wine, but it hasn't really affected me, partially because I can't let it. I'm in the business of comedy, and I can't let one incident turn me solemn and unable to write jokes.

Now that you've proven Nielsen ratings don't actually measure the popularity of a show, does that make you the most powerful person in television?

SM: Believe me, no. I am still subject to the whims of my masters. So many times in the past, I've said, "Oh, they'd never cancel the show now," and I've learned never to say that again. They've canceled it twice already—why not three times?

PG: I swear to God, if they cancel it again, I am going to walk right into Fox and take a dump on Clay Aiken's desk.



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Set It Off

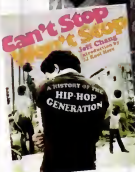
The fires that fueled the hip-hop generation blaze on in Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop Won't Stop*

By Laura Sinagra

Before there was rap, there was the beef: In his massive, multifaceted cultural history of hip-hop, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, Jeff Chang retraces the music's emergence in the 1970s as part of a battle between gangs of New York that would easily crush Scorsese's. But the clashes of Bronx crews with names like the Savage Skulls and the Ghetto Brothers would yield a truce, making hip-hop's earliest block parties possible.

Filling that post-truce gap was the booming sound system of DJ Kool Herc, whose conversations with Chang delve deep into his Jamaican childhood and reggae roots. "Herc had endured taunts for being an immigrant," says Chang. "For him, making a name was a process of becoming an American."

Chang, 37, a hip-hop journalist and contributor to numerous publications (including *Spin*), says he can relate: After growing up in suburban Hawaii, he moved to Berkeley, California, in 1985, where he threw himself into hip-hop culture. Before founding the SoleSides collective of artists (which later morphed into the great indie-rap label Quannum



"This sweet 16 is illin'!": Run-D.M.C. play a birthday party for record exec Charles Koppelman's daughter

Projects), Chang would observe the moments and movements he documents in *Can't Stop*, from the media frenzy around Public Enemy to the Los Angeles riots and N.W.A., to the rise of hip-hop media. While it paints an indelible portrait of hip-hop's formative years, *Can't Stop* avoids some of rap's recent history, including the murders of Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G. "I'm still dealing with the fallout of this period," says Chang. "Maybe I wanted to do a heroic kind of narrative, and it just didn't fit." And while he has his opinions on how today's hip-hop stars stack up against the legends of the past, Chang says his book wasn't the place to express them. "You don't ever want to take something away from a kid," he says. "You don't wanna go in and say, '50 Cent—oh, he's so terrible.' They have to find their own way, like I did."

Sole Providers

Get your laces flowing with *Sneakers: The Complete Collectors' Guide* by Celeste Moore

For almost a century, they've helped improve your game, define your cultural identity, and keep you from going barefoot. Now, in *Sneakers: The Complete Collectors' Guide* (Thames & Hudson), tennis shoes finally get to run their victory lap. Compiled by Unorthodox Styles, the British design team behind crookedtongues.com, the book delves deep underneath the tongues of 180 different trainers. Here's how five of the most influential treads made their imprints.

Adidas Superstar

German shoemaker Adolf "Adi" Dassler launched the company that would eventually become Adidas in 1924 with his brother, Rudolph. Introduced in 1969, the Superstar was the first low-top leather basketball shoe and came standard with shoelaces when not being worn by Run-D.M.C.



Vans Sk8-Hi

With its padded collar (designed to help extreme athletes minimize ankle injuries), the vintage '70s Sk8-Hi remains a favorite with top skaters, even though current designs offer better protection. It may also be the only thing hardcore punks don't totally hate—Social Distortion collaborated with Vans to create their own version.



Puma Suede

In typical rock-star fashion, the Dassler brothers had a falling out, and little Rudi became Adi's toughest competitor by founding Puma in 1948. The Suede predated the Adidas Superstar by one year—old-school sneakerheads wore theirs with thick laces to make the shoes look as wide as possible.



Nike Marathon

At a time when consumers could still be wowed by eight-tracks and lava lamps, this 1972 model was one of the first to offer a nylon upper and a raised heel to help with shock absorption. It also featured a noticeably chubbier "Swoosh" logo, which Nike put on a fat-free diet in the '80s.



Converse All Star

Created in 1917 and rabidly endorsed by basketball player Chuck Taylor (of the Akron Firestones), the All Star came in numerous varieties, including leather, denim, and an '80s-era two-tone, fold-down model popular with skateboards and BMX riders. The Ramones, the Strokes, and Punky Brewster dug 'em too.

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Ham, solo: *One Man Star Wars Trilogy's* Charles Ross (above and right) overacts less than Mark Hamill (below)



Alone in the Darth

A one-man reenactment of *Star Wars* is nerdier—and funnier—than you can possibly imagine **By David Peisner**

There are words that best describe the spectacle of a lanky actor in elbow pads, tumbling around a bare stage as he performs scenes from *Star Wars* movies, and Charles Ross has heard them all. "You think I don't realize I'm a dork?" he asks, having just finished presenting his *One Man Star Wars Trilogy* at the 14th Street Playhouse in Atlanta, to an audience of children, parents, gawky teenagers, and at least a half-dozen middle-aged men. "I'm king of the dorks."

The 30-year-old Canadian began staging his hyperactive distillation of George Lucas' sci-fi films (just the first three, nonsucky ones) at small clubs and theaters in 2001. A *Star Wars* addict who claims to have seen *A New Hope* about 400 times (and *Empire* and *Jedi* about 50 times each), Ross handles all the characters, music, and special effects himself, without props or costumes, condensing several hours of light-saber battles and Death Star trench runs into a 60-minute show. The result is a half homage, half satire that sends up the franchise's penchant for over-explaining the obvious, the whininess of Luke Skywalker, and the weirdly incestuous relationship between Luke and

Princess Leia. ("Leia's my sister?" he asks as Luke. "Well," he answers as Obi-Wan, "she's the only woman in the movie.")

"He does so much in one hour," says Kathy van Beuningen, a 42-year-old Chicagoan who's seen the show 34 times, wearing her full Stormtrooper armor on each occasion. "If you start laughing, you'll miss the next gag." She's one of the more down-to-earth personalities in Ross' galaxy of fans. "I once had people who'd come from this *Star Wars*-themed wedding," he recalls. "I suppose I was their foreplay before the honeymoon."

Ross recently got a nod of approval from Jedi Master Lucas when he was invited to appear at Celebration III, the officially sanctioned *Star Wars* convention honoring this month's release of

Episode III: Revenge of the Sith. ("I was thrilled not to be getting sued," says Ross.) And though he has since added a *One Man Lord of the Rings* to his repertoire, Ross says his love for the *Star Wars* films will always be his driving force. "They're easy to make fun of," he says. "But I remember being a kid and being uninhibited. You could be anybody, any character. I still believe that."



The Spin 20

05.05

LAST MONTH	THIS MONTH	ARTIST/TITLE	MONTHS ON CHART
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10	3	AN OVERDUE WEDDING FOR TWO HOMELY BRITISH PEOPLE APPARENTLY THE MOST NEWS-WORTHY STORY OF THE CENTURY	64
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10	5	50 CENT VS. THE WORLD UP NEXT: THOSE PUNK-ASS BITCHES IN CB4 AND FAT ALBERT AND THE JUNKYARD GANG	46
20	6	THAT NIGHTMARE WE HAD IN WHICH FRED DURST MADE A SEX VIDEO THEN WE WOKE UP WITH THIS WEIRD AVERSION TO BABY CARROTS	18
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15	9	MALE PROSTITUTES AT WHITE HOUSE PRESS CONFERENCES "MR. PRESIDENT, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO PRINCE ALBERT"	7
9	10	SEEING OUR MOST BELOVED ROCK ICONS CO-OPTED BY THE STARS OF THE LIZZIE MCGUIRE MOVIE A ZONE WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO GO	11
41	11	CALLING YOURSELF A BACKSTREET "BOY" AT AGE 33 NOT EVEN MICHAEL JACKSON IS BUYING IT >	6
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>Biggest gainer this month ♦Pacesetter ♦Hot-Shot Debut

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rant and roll over:
pop-culture musing and abusing

The Rock Lexicon

Difficult-to-define musical genres explained in a concise and accessible way for the curious yet inexpert listener

By Chuck Klosterman Illustration by Tim Marrs

"I don't read your magazine anymore," says my 36-year-old sister as we ride in a rental car. "I don't read your magazine anymore because all you guys ever write about is emo, and I don't get it."

Now, for a moment, I find myself very interested in what my sister is saying. I absolutely cannot fathom what she could possibly hate about emo, and (I suspect) this subject might create an interesting ten minutes of rental-car discussion. Does she find emo too phallogocentric? Do the simplistic chord progressions strike her as derivative? Why can't she relate to emo? I ask her these questions, and I await her answer. But her answer is not what I expect.

"No, no," she says. "When I say I don't get emo, I mean I literally don't know what it is. The word may as well be Latin. But I keep seeing jokes about emo in your magazine, and they're never funny, because I have no idea what's supposed to be funny about something I've never heard of."

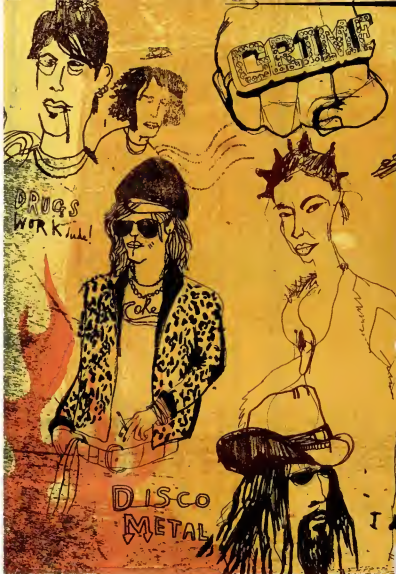
This, of course, leads to a spirited dialogue in which I say things like "'Emo' is short for emotional," and she says things like "But all pop music is about emotions," and I respond by saying, "It's technically a style of punk rock, but it's actually more of a personal, introspective attitude," and she counters with "That sounds boring," and then I mention Andy Greenwald (author of *Nothing Feels Good: Punk Rock, Teenagers, and Emo*), and she asks, "Wasn't Andy Greenwald a defensive end for the Pittsburgh Steelers in the late '70s?" and I say, "No, that was L.C. Greenwald, and I'm pretty sure he doesn't know any of the members of Senses Fail."

But anyway, I learned something important from this discussion: that reading rock magazines must be very confusing to people who only listen to rock music casually. Whenever journalists write about music, we always operate under the assumption that certain genres are self-evident and that placing a given band into one of those categories serves an expository purpose. Just as often, an artist will be described as a synthesis of two equally obscure subgenres, and we're all supposed to do the sonic math ourselves. However, this only helps the informed; that kind of description is useful to those who have already conquered the rock lexicon. What we need is a glossary of terms so we can all share an equal playing field.

I will do my best.

DISCO METAL: This is up-tempo, semiheavy guitar rock that someone (usually a stripper) could feasibly dance to. White Zombie made a lot of songs in this style. Weirdly, it does not seem to apply to straightforward metal bands (Kiss, Van Halen) who overtly write disco songs ("I Was Made for Lovin' You," "Dance the Night Away"). No one knows why.

SHOEGAZE: Music by artists who stare at their feet while performing—presumably because they are ashamed to be playing such sham-bolic music to an audience of weirdos.



POST-ROCK: This is when a group of rock musicians employ traditional rock instrumentation to perform music for people who traditionally listen to rock—except these musicians don't play rock and the songs don't have any vocals. I don't get it either. The premier band of this genre is Tortoise, and the kind of people who like post-rock are the same kind of people who think it's a good idea to name a band Tortoise.

PSYCH: (as in "psychedelic") The modifier *psych* has only recently come back in vogue, which is interesting. You have possibly heard the terms "psych folk" (sometimes applied to artists in the vein of Devendra Banhart) or "psych country" (which is vaguely similar to what used to be called "outlaw country") or "psych rock" (which is what Courtney Taylor of the Dandy Warhols calls his band's sound in the documentary *DIG!*). I've made a great effort to try to find the unifying principle among these permutations of *psych* music, and the answer is probably what'd you expect: This is music for drug addicts, made by drug addicts. If you are in a Tejano quartet and all four of you start taking mescaline (and if all the kids who come to your shows drop acid in the parking lot before entering the venue), you now play "psych Tejano." That's the whole equation.

GRIME: Almost two years ago, I asked two learned people at *Spin* to explain to me what grime is. They both said, "Don't worry about it. You will never need to know. It's completely unnecessary knowledge." Then, over the next few weeks, grime came up in conversation on three separate occasions. And it would always come up in the same manner: Someone would mention either Dizze Rascal or the Streets,



refer to them as grime artists, and immediately be told, "Those aren't real grime artists. That's not real grime." As such, this is all I know about grime—it's British rap (but not really) that is kind of "like garage and 2-step" (but the word garage is pronounced like *marriage*), and it's supposedly a reflection of life in lower-class London neighborhoods like Brixton. If anyone out there knows what grime is, e-mail me at cklosterman@spin.com. But make sure you write "This is about grime" in the subject line so I will know to ignore it completely.

FASHION ROCK: The concept of fashion rock revolves around (a) appearing to be impoverished while (b) spending whatever little money you possess on stylish clothing (and possibly cocaine). In short, fashion rockers aspire to look like superlucky hobos, which is obviously nothing new (this look was called "gutter glam" by L.A. hair bands in the 1980s and "mod" by British gothballs in the late 1960s). What's curious, however, is that fashion rock—though defined by clothing—does seem to have an identifiable sound, which is a kind of self-conscious sloppiness that translates as a British version of the Strokes (this is best illustrated by the Libertines, but even more successfully by the Killers, possibly because they are not even British).

RAWK: This is how people who start bands in order to meet porn stars spell rock. It is also applied to long-haired guitar players who can't play solos.

PROG: There was a time when "progressive rock" was easy to define, and everybody knew who played it—Jethro Tull, ELP, Yes, and other

peculiar, bombastic men who owned an inordinate number of Moog synthesizers during the mid-1970s. This was an extremely amusing era for rock; the single best example from the period was King Crimson's 1969 song "21st Century Schizoid Man," a track built on a spooky two-pronged premise: What would it be like to encounter a fellow who was not only from the distant future, but also suffering from an untreated mental illness? At the time, "21st Century Schizoid Man" was the definition of proggy. However, just about anything qualifies as prog in 2005. An artist can be referred to as "kind of proggy" if he or she does at least two of the following things: writes long songs, writes songs with solos, writes songs about mythical creatures, writes songs that girls hate, grows a beard, consistently declines interview requests, mentions Dream Theater as an influence, claims to be working on a double album, claims to be working on a rock opera, claims to have already released a rock opera, appears to be making heavy metal for people who don't like heavy metal, refuses to appear in his or her own videos, makes trippy music without the use of drugs, uses laser technology in any capacity, knows who Dream Theater is.

MUSK OX ROCK: Combining woolly '90s grunge with the ephemeral elasticity of Icelandic artists like Björk and Sigur Rós, so-called oxenheads deliver rich, nurturing riffs that replicate the experience of melting glaciers, troll attacks, and political alienation. The genre includes bands such as Switchfoot, Radiohead, and Bettie Serveert.

IDM: This is an acronym for "Intelligent Dance Music." Really. No, really. I'm serious. This is what they call it. Really. ■

Four years ago **Nine Inch Nails'**

Trent Reznor

found himself at the end of his rope after descending into **a hell of booze**

and drugs. Now, as he emerges from the darkness with a new album, new band, new tour, and new lease on life, he reveals the truth behind his downward spiral.

The Shadow of Death

By **Marc Spitz**

Photographs by **Frank W. Ockenfels 3**



"It was very
clear to me
that I was
trying to
kill myself."

He can see out. But you can't see in.

For a decade, he's been "that guy in there," behind the cement walls and black-tinted windows of this sprawling property on busy Magazine Street in New Orleans' French Quarter. Outside, mutts and garrulous families play on peeling front porches. Tourists browse the mini-malls set in 200-year-old storefronts. Today, much of the city is enjoying the Bacchus Parade during Mardi Gras, tailgating as cotton-candy vendors and colorful floats of angels, devils, snakes, and sirens roll by.

The French Quarter is always full of this kind of life. But inside this building, a former funeral parlor turned live-in recording studio, there has been all kinds of death. The lone occupant, looking out at you through those one-way windows or on the security monitors—you might know him. Maybe you'd recognize his voice if you heard him sing. Intimate phrasing. Screams. Back in the '90s, if you were lonely and upset, he might have been your perfect imaginary friend. The one who articulated your pain, saved your life even. But to his neighbors, and to most others in this new century, he's been Boo Radley, Charles Montgomery Burns, Bad Ronald, the Wizard of Oz behind his curtain. A twisted recluse walking around naked, maybe. Or much worse.

"Let me give you the tour," Trent Reznor offers after opening the large wrought-iron gate and waving me into the foyer. I feel a bit like Keanu Reeves' Jonathan Harker at the beginning of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. The man behind Nine Inch Nails has a large-ish head like Gary Oldman's Count, pale skin with very little pink in it. He's dressed in black: T-shirt, cargo pants, and sneakers with orange piping. His hair is dyed to blue-black goth perfection. Someone has lit a few candles. Gargoyles and skulls haunt the foot of a wide staircase leading to a...tricked-out coffin? A torture chamber? "Actually, there are a bunch of old, broken video games up there," he says with a shy laugh.

Trent Reznor doesn't really suck blood or ball gags. He drinks protein shakes. And a lot of black coffee. He's not trying to spook me with the candles. It's aromatherapy. I've been summoned here not to close some shady real estate deal or dally with undead babes, but rather to talk. And to listen. I don't want to mess with his anonymity, but in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings they call this "sharing." Opening up and humbly interacting with your neighbor. Trent Reznor may or may not have been to a few of these.

"I have weird social anxiety," he explains as we sit on the black leather couch in the studio's control room. I've already been shown much of the interior, its hidden spaces, many of them cold and empty.

"People need to believe that I mean what I'm saying again."



"Hey you, the dude who grabbed my sleeve. Your ass is mine!" Reznor and Nine Inch Nails hammer Florida in 2000

I've even looked in Reznor's fridge (Kellogg's Special K Red Berries for breakfast). But this socializing still feels weird. Like getting the quietest kid in class as your study hall partner. "I'd rather not feel this way," Reznor says. "It's like being at a party and feeling like I forgot to wear pants, feeling like I'm on fire."

Reznor is adored by his fans, but his parents left him when he was six. He has seen the world with his band but was raised by his maternal grandparents in Mercer, Pennsylvania, a small mining town. In high school he was a band geek and a computer nerd, but he loved Kiss' bombast and Queen's pomp. And girls (most of whom didn't requite). All of this seemed designed to create a real head case of a rock star. In the past, Reznor used his material wealth to numb himself rather than examine any of these sources of psychic pain. Until recently, songwriting didn't provide much therapy either.

"I think it's easy to rationalize any behavior in any context," he says. "But when you have success and some money behind you, it's even easier." All the platinum records and framed magazine covers and posters from

the films he's scored line the walls in here. When he worried about himself, they were there to make him feel big, if not whole.

"New Orleans was a way for me to isolate myself," Reznor admits. These days, whenever he says something honest, he'll smile and shake his head very slightly, as if he can't quite believe his own lack of bullshit. "Living here was a way for me to hide, which is one of my things I'll do if left unattended." He grins again. I reflexively brace myself for a confession. "It could have been the lure of partying, too."

As he prepares to release his fourth studio album, *With Teeth* (fifth, if you count 1992's *Broken EP*), Trent Reznor—"that guy in there"—is emerging. Tomorrow he'll ride a float in a Mardi Gras parade. "I'm not leading it," he stresses. "Nobody will know who I am." He'll be in disguise, but everyone else will be masked as well. He'll fit right in. A few days later Reznor will leave New Orleans. He's putting everything in storage and settling in Los Angeles. If he ever returns, it'll be with his band—for a few hours in a concert hall. He's not going back to where he's been. "I've truly reached the point where I never, ever wanna be that guy again," he says. "I couldn't bear it."

There's been a lot of debauchery on and around this very couch. "This is the room where the [Marilyn] Manson guys and I decided we were going to build tents and watch the first three *Alien* movies at eight in the morning while the drugs still lasted," he remembers. "Jordie [White, a.k.a. Manson's then-bassist Twiggy Ramirez] almost burned the place down lighting fireworks. A lot of crazy shit went on. I felt like I was pretty normal. I'd party like everyone else did, but suddenly you're supposed to be a big rock star, and I didn't really feel like I was that person. And with a few drinks in me, I thought I could be that person. If I had some drinks and someone said, 'Hey, you wanna get some cocaine?'—that seemed like a great idea."

Each Nine Inch Nails album has taken a half-decade to make. "Every time, it's a different reason," Reznor says. From his debut album, 1989's *Pretty Hate Machine*, to 1994's *The Downward Spiral*, Reznor spent much of his energy legally extricating himself from his deal with indie label TVT, recording the *Broken EP* on the sly, and founding his own imprint, Nothing Records, at Interscope. From 1994 to 1999, he faced an even bigger challenge: dealing with superstardom. Famously recorded in the Benedict Canyon, California home where actress Sharon Tate and four others were massacred by Charles Manson's Family, *The Downward Spiral* was a critical and commercial smash that has sold four million copies (a tenth anniversary edition was issued last November). The single "Closer" still boasts the filthiest chorus to ever

get bleeped on rock radio, and its deliciously grotesque, Joel-Peter Witkin-inspired video was all over MTV despite containing constant edits that suggested images had been deleted by censors.

"I handed in *Downward Spiral* with an apology. 'Here it is. I'll tour on it, but I'm not gonna change it.' And then unexpectedly 'Closer' takes off, and then Woodstock, and it's like, 'Whoa!' That part, the upward track, the roller coaster taking you up is pretty fun," Reznor remembers. Nine Inch Nails stole Woodstock '94 (the one without the fires and rapes) the same way they stole Lollapalooza '91: by proving to a mass audience that industrial rock was indeed rock. For a band that wore arm-length fishnet gloves and black lipstick, they played so hard and fast that punks and heshers alike were pummeled into respectfulness. Reznor's scores for Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, David Lynch's *Lost Highway*, and the video game *Quake* were all easily as compelling as the controversial and often violent imagery.

He produced Marilyn Manson's 1996 breakthrough album, *Antichrist Superstar*, and reportedly trysted with the recently widowed Courtney Love. Her band Hole played some of their first *Live Through This* shows on the *Downward Spiral* tour, and after witnessing some backstage antics, she publicly impugned Reznor's manhood ("More like Three Inch Nails"). Anti-rock and-rap activist C. Delores Tucker was another well-connected foe. Undaunted, Reznor revived David Bowie's career in 1995, touring with and remixing songs for his hero. With Jane's Addiction broken up and Beck and Radiohead still trying to prove themselves as more than one-hit wonders, Reznor ran neck and neck with Billy Corgan as the most important modern-rock artist of the '90s who wasn't Kurt Cobain.

Like Corgan, Reznor was practically obligated to come back with a bloated double album. And he did, with help from legendary producer Bob Ezrin (Pink Floyd's *The Wall*). Despite topping the *Billboard* album chart its first week out, in September 1999, and being named *Spin*'s Album of the Year, *The Fragile* is, in places, an ambitious and extremely beautiful failure. "The *Fragile* was an album based a lot in fear, because I was afraid as fuck about what was happening to me," Reznor says. "That's why there aren't a lot of lyrics on that record. I couldn't fucking think. An unimaginable amount of effort went into that record in a very unfocused way." And people noticed: It sold only half as many copies as NIN's previous album. "Coming down is not nearly as much fun," Reznor jokes. "There was a real arrogance on our part. We said [to Interscope], 'Here's the new record. Get out of the way. This is the new thing. Deal with it.'" But it was a very different climate in the world of music. Nobody really understood what the record was about. The label just threw their hands up." Reznor shudders faintly and takes another sip of coffee. "Looking out and seeing



Scream us a song, you're the piano man: Reznor at 14 and 21



If these walls could shriek: Reznor's former New Orleans haunt

empty seats in the back of the arena that you shouldn't have played away, but arrogance got you there. Combine that with personal ruin? It's hard to look cool vomiting in a toilet, know what I mean?"



Reznor spent the first part of the next five-year interval trying very hard to die.

"When *The Fragile* debuted at No. 1, I felt, 'It's time to have a drink,'" he says. "That whole tour I was in a constant state of withdrawal and sickness. The success of that record was the first week. Then the label had had enough, and the public seemed to have had enough, and I'd had enough." With no single taking off (even the Marilyn Manson-augmented "Starfuckers Inc." didn't click) and a dearth of stage-friendly new songs, Reznor was left with the screaming monkey from the "Closer" video on his PVC-covered back. "It lead me down a very dark and terrible path. At the end of it, which was close to four years ago, it was very clear to me that I was trying to kill myself.

"That was the path I chose," he continues. "I was going to just drink myself or drug myself out of it. I got back to New Orleans after the *Fragile* tour, and I'd pretty much lost my soul. I just felt like nothing: 'Being famous doesn't matter. I don't like myself. I think I'm a piece of shit.' It was unquestionably the worst thing ever. Just lying all the time about everything. I was in terrible physical shape, too."

Burnout rumors began to circulate: He was a powder-scorched zombie who could only converse with hookers; he'd lost all his money, sold his equipment, and was spending his days placing voodoo hexes on record execs. Reznor had, in fact, hit bottom, like most addicts and drunks do, unless they die. Then came the death of a close friend. "His name was Rodney Robertson, and he worked for me at the studio," Reznor says. "[He was] from the New Orleans projects. I wanted to help him out. This guy had a doomed life. His sister died of AIDS. We'd go for rides where he'd show me a burned-out building: 'That's where I grew up. There used to be a swing set there.'"

One morning Robertson's mother phoned. Her son hadn't come home. "I happened to turn my head, and the TV was on, and I saw his truck," Reznor says. "Someone had executed him. Shot him in the head in the projects. I was so fucked up I couldn't go to the funeral. And that seemed to be what it took for me to say, 'Not for me, for him.'"

The main tenet of getting clean is admitting you have no control



Remaking the band: Reznor, center, with Aaron North, Alessandro Cortini, Jordie White, and Jerome Dillon are Nine Inch Nails, 2005

over your addiction. For Reznor, initially at least, that was antithetical to the way he approached his life and work. The credits on *Pretty Hate Machine*'s booklet infamously read: "Nine Inch Nails Is Trent Reznor." The lyrics to the album's first song scream, "I'd rather die than give you control." "Somebody telling me I had a drinking problem was not something I wanted to hear," he says, recalling his initial exposure to rehab. "But miraculously, the message took, and I learned a lot about myself. I learned that I don't know everything. That was a new concept. Because I was pretty sure that I did."

The ninth step of A.A.'s 12-step program suggests you make amends with those you hurt while you were abusing alcohol. These people, though certainly grateful that you are not dead, are not always forgiving or understanding of the "new you." "I remember sitting in rehab, listening to people with wives or husbands. They've finally

Closer, But No Cigar

Whatever became of those rumored Reznor side projects?



Collaborator:
Maynard James Keenan
When: 1999-2002
The project: NIN's then-bassist Danny

Lohner and Atticus Ross filled out the supergroup Tapeworm.

What happened: "The end result was average," Reznor says. "There was a desire to make something radio-friendly from some people, and there was my desire to make something I wanted to hear. If it's not greater than the sum of its parts, then there's no reason for it to come together."



Collaborator:
Zack De La Rocha
When: 2002
The project: Reznor worked on 20 tracks for

the former Rage frontman's solo debut.

What happened: "We hit it off on a friendship level. I was impressed with what he brought to the table. But there were some direction problems with him and his label, a bit of self-sabotaging. I'm not sure he was ready to make a record at that time. I'm looking forward to seeing what happens with his stuff. I'm open to working with him again."



Collaborator:
Dr. Dre
When: 1997
The project: Reznor said in an interview that he

told the superstar rapper/producer he wanted the proposed album (not a mere remix collection) to be a collaboration that would "change music."

What happened: "There's the Interscope connection there and a mutual admiration—or at least my admiration for [Dre]. He helped us mix a track ['Even Deeper'] on *The Fragile*. That's about the extent of that."



Collaborator:
Ian Astbury
When: 2003
The project: Reznor and Atticus Ross

recorded songs with the Cult singer-turned-Jim Morrison substitute.

What happened: "We have a handful of tracks that are pretty fucking cool. Ian is one of the best singers out there. He thinks it's an honor to be able to sing with the Doors. But why? I never liked the Doors. But if Adam and the Ants got back together and needed someone to sing, I'd put my pirate outfit on." M.S.

decided to fix their lives. [But then there's] the years of torture they've inflicted on people around them, the lives they've helped ruin. Those people aren't going to just say, 'Great to have you back.'"

Reznor's career-long partnership with manager John Malm was one casualty of the artist's about-face. Due to ongoing litigation, neither party can talk specifically about the split (Malm didn't respond to numerous requests for an interview), but Reznor will allow a little insight. "It's involving money and lots of things you can't believe someone would do to you," he says. "Ultimately, it's my fault for not paying attention. Finding you're not where you were financially because of deceit is one big surprise."

"The dynamic of a relationship changes when one person gets sober," he elaborates. "I remember thinking how thankful I was that I wasn't married or in a relationship that had to refigure itself out. And then it dawned on me that I was in that relationship—with my longest and dearest friend, who happened to be my manager. It became clearer that my relationship with John was deteriorating. We'd bitch at each other more on the phone, and I wanted to try to at least say, 'Look, I'm not just a drunk guy you put in a closet and take out once in a while and wash off occasionally. Treat me like an adult. I am one. Thank you for helping me through those times, but I'm an adult.' I don't know what a divorce is like, but if it's like this, it's not fun."



Whatever the outcome of the lawsuit, *With Teeth* stands to be more commercially successful than *The Fragile*, even with the Wal-Mart's of the world less inclined to stock bands like NIN than they were in '94 (the first single, "The Hand That Feeds," is an attack on Bush's right-wing agenda). Like Neil Young in the late '80s, Dylan in the mid-'90s, or Prince last year, Reznor will likely succeed because he's an artist we once believed in who is making music we can believe in again. All the pain he was singing about? "Down in It," "Wish," "Mr. Self Destruct," "Closer," and "Hurt"—for awhile, it was real. We believed it, and bought it. Then, with *The Fragile*, it began to feel forced, leading to the empty seats in big arenas.

Now the voice seems authentic again. The new songs are lyrically dense and confessional. Over a relatively economical 13 songs, *With Teeth* shifts from *Downward Spiral*-like shock production ("Love Is Not Enough") to almost gospel-piano prettiness ("All the Love in the World") to harsh industrial screech ("You Know What You Are?"). If there's also an odd playfulness ("Only" seems to relish its seriously cheesy disco drums), that's because this time the process came easier.

"There was a pretty good game plan," Reznor explains. "I had themes and subjects. I tried to keep a lo-fi aesthetic running through it, a kind of carelessness. As my brain started working, the songs just started to come out. I regained my self-confidence."

If you searched the Web for Nine Inch Nails updates last winter, you likely saw a lot of apologetic posts about *With Teeth*'s arrival. Someone had enough zeal to illegally upload a pair of songs, including the first single. ("As infuriating as that can be for an artist," Reznor says of the leak, "another way of looking at it is, 'Hey, people still care.'") Just seeing that tattered, ragged logo—the lowercase "nin"—snipped all over New York City in late February was thrilling. Fifteen years since *Pretty Hate Machine* and there's no shortage of lonely, angry souls who still want the truth out of Trent Reznor. The difference now, in 2005, is that so does Trent Reznor.

"People need to believe that I mean what I'm saying again," he says. "I don't think I believed it last time because I was lying about everything else. I felt like I was an actor on that last tour. An actor in a play that wasn't that great."

On May 1 NIN will headline the second day of the sixth annual Coachella Valley music festival. Sixteen days later Reznor will turn 40. "I look at [the years of insobriety] as a chapter that's served its pur-

pose," he reflects. "It got me to where I am now. I like myself right now. I feel like I've reactivated myself. But I also find I don't know how I got to be 39. I should be 26." Coachella organizer Paul Tollett is one person not worried about Reznor's relevance in the current musical climate. "Younger fans always have a way of finding out the real thing," he says, "whether it's from the '60s, '70s, or early '90s. I am not concerned about whether they know NIN or not. I give them more credit than that."

NIN's next tour will begin in clubs and theaters right before Coachella. Reznor will highlight much of the new material with a new band—*Fragile*-era drummer Jerome Dillon, Jeordie White, guitarist Aaron North (formerly of L.A. punks the Icarus Line), and Alessandro Cortini (of modwheelmoood). And he will play while loaded... on black coffee.

"Trent always leaves a nice, fresh boot print in the face of contemporary music with each record he releases," says Brian Viglione of the tour's opening act, cabaret punkers the Dresden Dolls. "I've always been inspired by his dedication to executing his artistic vision with conviction and clarity."

"I don't know how I got to be 39. I should be 26."



"I would like to think that a lot of ghosts have been cleaned out of the closet—it's not going to be a five-year cycle [between albums] anymore," Reznor says. "There's another record almost done that I hope to put out within a year." He's moving to L.A., he says, because he wants to be in "the epicenter." "Whatever joy I have gotten from turning off the world, I now get from being able to function at a higher than normal percentage," he admits. "It might be the 15 cups of coffee, but I'm not hiding anymore. I've actually returned people's calls, which is a first. It's mainly to be around peers. Just to be around shit and not feel like I'm on an island."

As Reznor leads me back into the foyer, his publicist asks how our interview went. Reznor grabs his ass and mocks being buggered. It's clear that socializing, especially with a journalist, is still not his survival thing. But he acknowledges that it's become necessary, with survival being only the most basic of its rewards. Family, children, more happiness could be next. "My chances of being alive a year from now," he says, "are much greater than they were a couple of years ago."

He lets me out to Mardi Gras. Soon, he'll follow me. Through this big, black, wrought-iron gateway and into the sunlight. ■



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SPIN 69

8

Bands for Binge Drinking

- 1 EVERCLEAR
- 2 WHISKEYTOWN
- 3 OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL
- 4 SWIRLIES
- 5 BUILT TO SPILL
- 6 BAD LIVERS
- 7 THE FALL
- 8 PAVEMENT

Nine Best Rock Stage Names

- 1 **Jello Biafra** *Eric Boucher* (the Dead Kennedys)
- 2 **Elvis Costello** *Declan* *McManus* 3 **Lux Interior** *Erick Lee Purkhiser* (the Cramps)
- 4 **Fee Waybill** *John Waldo* (the Tubes) 5 **Adam Ant** *Stuart Goddard* 6 **Poly Styrene** *Marion Elliot* (X-Ray Spex)
- 7 **Freddie Mercury** *Faroukh Bulsara* 8 **Jackie Kickassiss** *Jim Janota* (the Upper Crust)
- 9 **Blackie Onassis** *Johnny Rowan* (Urge Overkill)

Ten Qualities That Make a "Perfect Bitch," According to Nas

1. D-cup breasts with dark nipples
2. Maya Angelou's brain
3. Angelina Jolie's lips
4. Billie Holiday's street savvy
5. Sade's mystique
6. Sister Souljah's wit
7. Ability to load a gun
8. Ability to appear and disappear like I Dream of Jeannie
9. Is a chef
10. Willingness to do taxes

Five Songs That Are a Real Gas



- 1 "I CAN'T STOP FARTING" *The Queers*
"My flatulent ass sounds like 27 ducks / I sit and try to take a shit, but I'm shit outta luck"

- 2 "ENJOY!" *Descendents*
"Flatulation punctuates the still night air / And I thank God you're here"

- 3 "I FARTED" *The Hard-Ons*
"I only farted, just don't breathe / I wanna take you where you never been"

- 4 "BEN WAH BALLS" *blink-182*
"He sang a song from deep within his heart / Causing some indigestion / He finished with a great big fart"

- 5 "BURPING & FARTING" *MC Paul Barman*
"Don't be disheartened if you fart in a crowd / Silent but deadly / The cloud wasn't loud"

"Yo, dog, that was on! What do you think, Paula?"

"Play something the drummer knows!"

"Play that song from the iPod commercial!"

"Play your hit!"

"It must be garage rock, 'cause it sounds like you're sucking on car fumes!"

"Play your hit—again!"

Eight Good Heckles
(Generic)

"Could you guys keep it down? We're trying to talk over here!"

"Less guitar in the monitor!"

Seven Things You Should Know About Good Girls

1. THEY GO TO HEAVEN, BUT BAD GIRLS GO EVERYWHERE. (*Cheap Trick*)
2. THERE'S ONE IN PARTICULAR WHO AIN'T SEARCHIN', SHE KNOWS THE SCORE, AND IT AIN'T LOVE SHE'S LOOKIN' FOR. (*Kiss*)
3. THEY'RE TAKEN EVERY TIME. (*Joe*)
4. THEY DON'T STAY FOR BREAKFAST, WON'T BLOW YOUR EVENING, AND HAVE TO KEEP IT CLEAN. (*John Cougar Mellencamp*)
5. THEY'VE ALL DISAPPEARED. (*Ian Hunter*)
6. ONE WENT BAD 'CAUSE BITCHES EVEN GAFFLE BOSS BALLERS FOR CASH. (*Spice 1*)
7. THEY DON'T, BUT HE DOES. (*The Knack*)



Five Benefits of Turning Into a Yeti Onstage

BY GRUFF RHYS, SUPER FURRY ANIMALS

1. The immense feeling of strength and power
2. The tingling sensation prior to transformation as the euphoria of the audience causes a chemical reaction in the blood, leading to accelerated hair growth
3. The ability to walk around naked in snowy and icy conditions
4. The bonds of friendship and empathy one feels toward other mythical beasts: Bigfoot, dragons, etc.
5. Improved headbanging technique that comes with having extra-large hair



Ten Best One-Album Bands

1. **The Sex Pistols** 2. **The La's** 3. **The Modern Lovers** 4. **Minor Threat** 5. **X-Ray Spex** 6. **Germes** 7. **The Sun and the Moon** 8. **The Titanics** 9. **Young Marble Giants** 10. **Operation Ivy**

Seven Ways Def Jam Has Changed Since Jay-Z Became Its President

1. Soda machines dispense bottles of Heineken and fresh pairs of Reeboks
2. Hova's office window looks out on a giant dinosaur, whose tail extends to the front seat of his car
3. Corporate retirement program kicks in at age 31
4. Really crucial business decisions left up to Kanye West
5. Casual Fridays complemented by Rocawear Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays
6. Health care plan expanded to cover accidental pepper-sprays
7. Nas lyrics printed on all toilet-seat protectors



FIVE

Five Good Bands That Are Difficult to Google

1. **The Muffs**
2. **The Music**
3. **A**
4. **The**
5. **X**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Things in Karen O's Purse</p> <p>1 Parking validation ticket for Victoria's Secret in Century City</p> <p>2 Extra pair of ripped fishnets</p> <p>3 Stella Artois-scented Binaca spray</p> <p>4 Manic Panic nail polish (color: Hell's Bells)</p> <p>5 Spike Jonze</p> | <p>Things in Carlos D.'s Gun Holster</p> <p>1 Full-day pass for the Renaissance Faire</p> <p>2 All-black Rubik's Cube key chain</p> <p>3 His lucky rat's foot</p> <p>4 Shoe polish (for boots and hair)</p> <p>5 iPod (Bauhaus Special Edition)</p> |
|---|--|



The Five Best Books Actually Written by Musicians

1 THE MANUAL (HOW TO HAVE A NUMBER ONE THE EASY WAY) by Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty
Drummond, the Scottish oddball who managed Echo and the Bunnymen, went on to form the KLF and Justified Ancients of Mu Mu. The book is a crazy and serious (if not entirely practical) primer on doing what he and partner Cauty had just done: topped the British charts (with a single called "Doctorin' the Tardis") completely on their own.

2 HOLLYWOOD ROCK by Marshall Crenshaw
Perhaps it was playing Buddy Holly in *La Bamba* that led the Detroit-born singer/songwriter/guitarist to write an excellent reference book on movies with cool music and/or the musicians in them.

3 CHRONICLES, VOLUME ONE by Bob Dylan
The idea that Dylan had been keeping this fascinating stuff to himself all these years more than compensates for the occasional factual errors and off-the-wall musings.

4 ON THE ROAD WITH THE RAMONES by Monte A. Melnick and Frank Meyer
Featuring brutally honest testimony by anyone who had anything of consequence to do with the band of brudders, this oral history (cowritten by Melnick, the group's career-long tour manager and a former bassist in his own right) is the ultimate insider document.

5 ROTTEN: NO IRISH, NO BLACKS, NO DOGS by John Lydon
There's no one like the former singer of the Sex Pistols, and his book is like no one else's. Part oral history, part score-settling diatribe, it's rugged, harsh, funny, and futile—in equal measure.

FOR THE STROKES:
"Play it again, Julian!
Casablanca
...get it?!"

FOR INTERPOL:
"Turn on the bright lights...so we can leave!"

FOR SLAYER:
"Play something fast!"

FOR MÖTLEY CRÜE:
"Hanoi Rocks!"

Eight Good Heckles
(Band Specific)

FOR DEVO:
"Swift it good!"

FOR THE HIVES:
"Nice spats, Ikea boy!"

FOR YEAR YEAR YEARS:
"More like Karen Nol!"

FOR WILCO:
"That was great! Now play another one by the Replacements!"

Ten Best Two-Album Bands

1. Joy Division
2. **The Stone Roses**
3. The New York Dolls
4. Radio Birdman
5. Slint
6. The Slics
7. Eat
8. Compulsion
9. The Rentals
10. Toadies



Top Ten Instructive Songs (In Order of Desirability)

1. "Baby Let's Play God" (*Big Boys*)
2. "Let's Do It Again" (*the Staple Singers*)
3. "Let's Get Blown" (*Snoop Dogg*)
4. "Let's Go Crazy" (*Prince*)

"Let's Get It On"

(Marvin Gaye)

- 5.
6. "Let's Make Love" (*Sparks*)
7. "Let's Have a Baby" (*Candy Butchers*)
8. "Let's Go to Bed" (*the Cure*)
9. "Let's Talk About Sex" (*Salt 'N' Pepa*)
10. "Let's Build a Car" (*Swell Maps*)

Four Amazing Rock Websites

1. bandtoband.com Proving that all rock bands are related, this site can connect Hüsker Dü to Huey Lewis and the News in 13 steps.
2. amiright.com/parody This compendium of thousands of song parodies even features spoofs of Weird Al. How positively meta.
3. dinosaurdays.co.za Everything—yes,

everything—you ever wanted to know about classic, prog, hard, jazz, Kraut, Southern, and folk rock but were too ashamed to ask.

4. clubbo.com Subtitled "Music to believe in"—just don't expect it to be real. Buy all your Rockfingers, Suthrn Cuzn, and Yorgi, Master of the Konservnaya Banka merchandise here.

Ten Reasons Why The Surreal Life Is the Greatest Show in the History of Television

1 Snowboard Academy no longer Brigitte Nielsen's most embarrassing screen credit

2 Dave Coulier, the voice of reason

3 A drunk and naked Verne Troyer relieves himself against a wall

4 Confirmation that Jordan Knight really is the prick you always thought he was



5 FLAVOR FLAVI

6 After Vanilla Ice rages that nobody will ever let him forget he's Vanilla Ice, he raps "Ice Ice Baby" in a karaoke bar

7 Ron Jeremy revealed to be a lot less creepy than Erik Estrada

8 America's Top Model proclaims she could never pass up the opportunity to go skinny-dipping with a Go-Go

9 Masturbating to Peter Brady now guilt-free

10 Two "words": eraaah, eraaay



Songs That Would Make Great Movies

1 **The Cure's "Friday I'm in Love"**
Hugh Grant stars as Jerry Smithers, a professor with a crush on a mysterious goth girl (Christina Ricci) who attends his weekly James Joyce seminar at a small Milwaukee college. After she reveals herself to be a descendant of the Irish author, Jerry finds himself lost in a dark world of literary and romantic sadness. When he begins wearing smeared lipstick to class, the headmaster (Sean Connery) cancels his Friday lecture—and all hell breaks loose!

2 **The Ramones' "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker"**
Angelina Jolie plays Sheena, the eldest daughter of a stern New York rabbi, who rebels against her father's orthodox ways by moving to a different part of the Lower East Side, shaving her head, and opening an after-hours club called Discotheque a Go-Go. Colin Farrell is the randy Irish manager of a competing rock venue who falls for her, leading to a dramatic showdown in which one of the clubs will be forced to close!

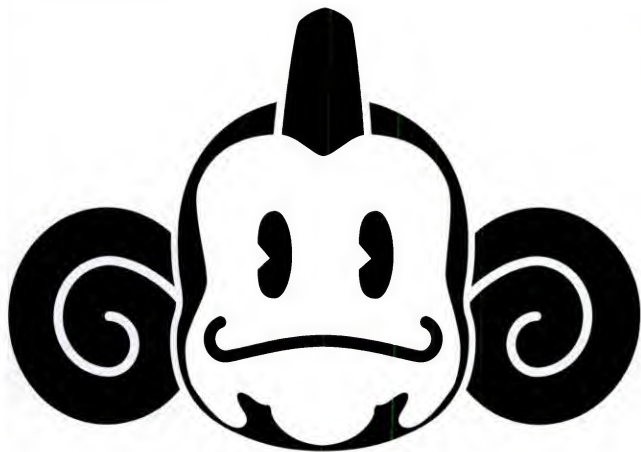
3 **Bryan Adams' "Summer of '69"**
Matt Dillon, as the aging owner of a musical instrument store in a small western Canadian town, narrates the tale of a band formed by three pals whose real reason for rocking was their urge to get with the local lovelies. Jessica Biel plays the mayor's daughter, who sleeps with the lead guitarist (James Van Der Beek), moves on to a band-destroying tryst with bassist Jimmy (Giovanni Ribisi), and then marries happy-go-lucky drummer Jody (Freddie Prinze Jr.), who grows up to become the proprietor of a Molson franchise!



Our Favorite Album Openers

BY RILO KILEY

1. "Speak to Me/Breathe," Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*
2. "Five Years," David Bowie's *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars*
3. "Welcome to the Jungle," Guns N' Roses' *Appetite for Destruction*
4. "Easy Skanking," Bob Marley's *Kaya*
5. "If Not for You," Bob Dylan's *New Morning*



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THE BAD



GUITAR COURTESY GUITAR CENTER

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALPHONSE TELYMONDE

SPIN 75

Seven Reasons LL Cool J Is Bad, According to His Song "I'm Bad"

- 1 No other rapper can rap quite like he can.
- 2 He'll take a muscle-bound man and put his face in the sand.
- 3 He's got a pinpoint rap that makes you feel trapped.
- 4 So many girls are on his jock that he thinks his phone is tapped.
- 5 Even when he's braggin', he's being sincere.
- 6 They call him Jaws, his hat is like a shark's fin.
- 7 He's notorious and he'll crush you like a jelly bean.



Who's Bad?

Seven Reasons Michael Jackson Is Bad, According to His Song "Bad"

- 1 Your butt is his.
- 2 He's gonna hurt your mind.
- 3 He knows your game and what you're about.
- 4 If you don't like what he's sayin', you can slap his face.
- 5 The whole world has to answer him right now.
- 6 He's smooth.
- 7 Wool Wool Wool

Ten Least Punk Rock Items Sold at Hot Topic

1. Depeche Mode Violator minidress
2. Playboy Bunny pink-and-black argyle pajama bottoms
3. The Rocky Horror Picture Show black-lace leg warmers
4. Insane Clown Posse Hatchetman wall clock
5. Nirvana happy-face terry cloth wristband
6. Playboy black-and-silver leather logo sneakers
7. Sex Pistols trucker hat
8. Misfits incense burner
9. Skull and crossbones light-switch cover
10. YOU SUCKAS JUST GOT SERVED tennis T-shirt



Three Head-Scratching Passages From The Wu-Tang Manual Volume 1, by the RZA

1 "People were asking, 'How can you get in front of a bunch of Caucasians or Mexicans or other nationalities and talk to them like they brothers?' I said, 'I gave up my shell already.' Of course, I bear witness to black man God Allah to take his proper place. But I don't think He's supposed to rise up in devilishment."

2 "I need to walk. I do it still, to think. Even now, I go to Staten Island, park my car, and walk. I travel the same path that I traveled so many times as a kid. Back then, I remember this one girl who used to see me out there walking from her window. She said, 'We used to think you were crazy. We'd see you out there, walking, talking to yourself.' I told her, 'I wasn't talking to myself. But I was probably talking.'"

3 "I look at chess in a metaphysical way. There are 64 squares on the board. Throughout Mathematics and throughout history, 64 is a deep number....[It's] also a very creative number. When the sperm meets the egg and they have meiosis, it splits into 64 separate cells—two to four, four to eight, then eight to 64. That's one life cell."



Five Singers Who Really Annoy Us

BY THE FUTUREHEADS



Adam Duritz



Alanis Morissette



Chris Carrabba



Jamiroquai



Dido

Hoobastank Around the World

1. Hoobastank
2. Hooba ha puzato
3. Hooba a pué
4. Hoobatesandou
5. Hoobapestó

(1. The Netherlands
2. Italy 3. France
4. Brazil 5. Mexico)

Ten Worst Rap-Rock Album Titles

1. *Le Cock Sportif* (Brougham)
2. *Hooray for Boobies* (Bloodhound Gang)
3. *Dingleberry Haze EP* (Bloodhound Gang)
4. *Jammin in Vicious Environments* (Shootyz Groove)
5. *Pin the Tail on the Honkey* (Dislocated Styles)
6. *Fome Is Dope* (Little-T and One Track Mike)
7. *Hidden Stash, Vol. II: The Kream of the Krop* (Kottonmouth Kings)
8. *Straight Outta Rehab* (Brooks Buford)
9. *Statutory Rap* (Pimpadelic)
10. *Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog Flavored Water* (Limp Bizkit)



- Ten Worst Rap-Rock Band Names
 1. Insane Clown Posse 2. Hot Sauce Johnson 3. Pimpadelic 4. Smokin Suckaz Wit Logic 5. Phunk Junkiez 6. Bitch Funky Sex Machine 7. Granola Funk Express 8. Fieldy's Dreams 9. 2 Skinnie J's 10. Disfunction-III

Eight Songs That Insist on Giving Way Too Much Information



"She's Got Balls," AC/DC

2. "Happy and Bleeding," PJ Harvey
3. "Blowjob From a Rattlesnake," Nashville Pussy
4. "No Panties," Trina
5. "Crabs in My Pants," Dillinger
6. "Chewin' George Lucas' Chocolate," Butthole Surfers
7. "Jack U Off," Prince
8. "Dick of Death," Pansy Division



Seven Things Pete Doherty Could Be Doing Right About Now

1. Pissing off Kate Moss
2. Looking up the word *recidivist*
3. Breaking rocks in the hot sun
4. Forming new power trio with Scott Weiland and Robert Downey Jr.
5. Making a new friend, then robbing him for drug money
6. Text-messaging the press about his latest arrest
7. Having nasty make-up sex with Kate Moss

Five Examples That Prove Metallica Was Right: Your Lifestyle Truly Does Dictate Your Deathstyle

1. In 2002, timber loggers died at a rate of 117.8 deaths per 100,000 workers (30 times above the national average).
2. Of the 840,000 cases of HIV in China, 44 percent are attributed to needle sharing.
3. Edmonton police are investigating the disappearances and murders of 78 women in Western Canada, most of whom were prostitutes and all of whom led what is called a "high-risk lifestyle."
4. According to elephant trainers Alan Roodcroft and Donald Atwell Zoll (in their book, *Managing Elephants: An Introduction to Their Training and Management*), approximately 100 deaths have occurred in circuses and zoos since 1980 due to elephant attacks.
5. While touring through Europe in 1986, a bus fell on Metallica bassist Cliff Burton.



Seven Worst Rock Replacement Singers

1. Sammy Hagar replacing David Lee Roth (Van Halen)
2. Gary Cherone replacing Sammy Hagar (Van Halen)
3. Johnny Van Zant replacing Ronnie Van Zant (Lynyrd Skynyrd)
4. John Tristao replacing John Fogerty (Creedence Clearwater Revival)
5. Ian Astbury replacing Jim Morrison (The Doors)
6. John Corabi replacing Vince Neil (Mötley Crüe)
7. Jim Belushi replacing John Belushi (The Blues Brothers)



4. "Hi, we're the Polyphonic Spree. I'd like to introduce the band!"

Six Things Said Onstage That We Never Want to Hear Again

1. "Ladies and gentlemen, the New Jersey Philharmonic Orchestra!"
2. "Okay, this next one is off our new album, which is just out on Sanctuary Records."
3. "Can I get a little more of my vocal in the monitor? Thanks, no, a little less. That's it. No, okay, just..."
5. "Are my niggas in this motherfucker? Are my bitches in this motherfucker?"
6. "No matter what you do, make sure you get out and vote for John Kerry."



Five Most Inappropriate 2005 Grammy Presenters

1. Christina Milian salutes 91-year-old blues legend Pinetop Perkins
2. Penelope Cruz shouts out Led Zepplin
3. Queen Latifah introduces Confederate apologists Lyrindr Skynnyrd
4. Hoobastank give props to classical conductor Morton Gould
5. Quentin Tarantino screams like a wigger lunatic for Green Day

Seven Telltale Signs Your Girlfriend Is Sleeping With Conor Oberst

- 1 Your Desaparecidos CD is missing—again
- 2 Asks if "Conor" is spelled with two n's or one as she's updating her blog



- 3 Expresses an interest in seeing Carhenge, Nebraska's all-automobile re-creation of Stonehenge
- 4 Wants to know what, exactly, a "Cornhucker" is required to do
- 5 Thinks Bright Eyes isn't such a bad band name
- 6 Calls *Digital Ash* in a *Digital Um* "the new OK Computer"
- 7 Wants to know who the hell that bitch Emmylou Harris thinks she is

Six Sex Tapes (Besides Fred Durst's) That We Never Want to See

1. Biz Markie
2. Bob Dylan (post-1970)
3. Frank Black
4. Morrissey
5. Creed
6. Phish

BAD BAD

Four Quotes That Suggest Fat Mike's Political Future May Be Extremely Shaky



1 "Most kids are ignorant. Maybe Warped kids are a little less ignorant than Ozfest kids. But they're almost the same."

2 "We [NOFX] have 20,000 fans in Florida. We could have made a difference there."

3 "When I see a Bush-Cheney bumper sticker on a car, it's time to slash their tires."

4 "When I run into a tourist in a Southern accent, I tell them to get the fuck out of San Francisco. We're at a culture war; I'm angry at them."

TEN

Worst Stage Names

1. **Fatty Buster Bloodvessel**
(Douglas Trendle, *Bad Manners*)
2. **Dinah Cancer**
(Mary Sims, *.45 Grave*)
3. **Sickie Wifebeater**
(Eric Carlson, *The Mentors*)
4. **Sting**
(Gordon Sumner, *The Police*)
5. **Rat Scabies**
(Chris Millar, *The Damned*)
6. **The Edge**
(Dave Evans, *U2*)
7. **Pat Smear**
(Georg Ruthenberg, *The Germs*, *Nirvana*, *Foo Fighters*)
8. **Chuck Wagon**
(Bob Davis, *The Dickies*)
9. **Puff Daddy/P. Diddy**
(Sean Combs)
10. **Engelbert Humperdinck**
(Arnold Dorsey)

Hip-Hop Lyrics That Should Never Double as Father/Son Birds-and-the-Bees Talk

- 1 "Nevertheless, don't mean to bust your bubble / But girls of the world ain't nothing but trouble / So next time a girl gives you the play / Just remember my rhymes and get the hell away" ("Girls Ain't Nothing but Trouble," D.J. Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince)
- 2 "And they'll get you for your money, son / Next thing you know you're getting their hair and their nails done." ("I Ain't Tha 1," N.W.A.)
- 3 "Sisters tell the truth / Bitches tell lies / Sisters drive cars / Bitches wanna ride / Sisters give up the ass / Bitches give up the ass / Sisters do it slow / Bitches do it fast" ("Bitches & Sisters," Jay-Z)
- 4 "So you get my point, son / You just don't trust no bitch, y'know what I'm sayin' / 'Okay, Daddy, I understand' / 'Cause bitches ain't no good, y'know what I'm sayin'" ("A Love That's True," Slick Rick)
- 5 "Pussy ain't nothin' but meat on a bone / You fuck it / You suck it / You leave it alone." ("Pussy Ain't Nothing," Schoolly D)





1. Vince Neil (face-lift)
2. Axl Rose (hair transplant, face-lift)
3. Glen Campbell (nose)
4. Courtney Love (boobs, nose, lips)
5. Paul Stanley (nose, face-lift, chin)
6. D'Arcy Wretzky (lips)
7. Lil' Kim (boobs, entire face)
8. Kylie Minogue (Botox)

1. Garth Brooks as tortured, soul-patched rocker Chris Gaines 2. New York Dolls as hammer-and-sickle-waving communists
3. Hootie and the Blowfish's Darius Rucker as Burger King cowpoke 4. Dee Dee Ramone as white rapper Dee Dee King
5. Courtney Love as Versace-model cyborg
6. MC Hammer as pimped-out gangsta
7. Vanilla Ice as dreadlocked reggae gangsta
8. Billy Idol as dreadlocked cyberpunk



1. Elvis Presley (dying on a toilet, 1977)
2. Bob Dylan (releasing *Saved*, his second, and most depressing, Christian album, 1980)
3. Lou Reed (helping to produce Billy Squier's *Creatures of Habit*, 1991)
4. Sly Stone (receiving more attention for cocaine bust than release of comeback single "Eek-ah-Bo-Static Automatic," 1987)
5. Jimi Hendrix (allowing "manager/producer" Alan Douglas into his life, therefore guaranteeing his exploitation for decades, 1969)
6. Jimmy Page (prancing with David Coverdale in video for Coverdale/Page's "Take Me for a Little While," 1993)
7. David Bowie (starting mime troupe called the Feathers, 1969)
8. Keith Richards (joining cast of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* sequel, 2004)
9. Kurt Cobain (Krist Novoselic revealing that Kurt never actually lived under a bridge, 2001)
10. André 3000 (allowing "Hey Yal!" to be co-opted by the Golden Globe Awards; sample lyric: "Shake it like a Golden Globe picture!" 2004)



1. Carol Channing with the U.S. Marine Corps Drill Team, 1972
2. Chubby Checker, the Rockettes, and 88 grand pianos, 1988
3. A 3-D presentation featuring Coke commercials, plus Elvis Preslo, an Elvis impersonator/magician, 1989
4. New Orleans salute with Pete Fountain and a *Peanuts* tribute with frolicking oversize Charlie Brown and Snoopy characters, 1990
5. **Michael Jackson heals the world with 3,500 clearly terrified children, 1993**
6. "Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye," featuring Tony Bennett, Patti LaBelle, a circus of 1,000 acrobats, fire-breathers, jugglers, skydivers, and audience participation with light sticks, 1995
7. "Celebration of Soul, Salsa, and Swing," featuring Big Bad Voodoo Daddy and a troupe of zoot-suited dancers on stilts, 1999

Lil Jon's Six Failed Marketing Schemes

1. Pimp Cup Coozies
2. Crunkkurpedic Mattress
3. Awww Yeeeah! Hot Stone Massage
4. Deezy Party Nutz
5. Bounce Data Fabric Softener
6. Pimpsurance (for when the hos get out of line)

Lil Jon's Six Failed Marketing Schemes



Seven Worst Black Sabbath Replacement Singers 1. Ronnie James Dio replacing Ozzy Osbourne 2. Ian Gillan replacing Ronnie James Dio 3. Glenn Hughes replacing Ian Gillan 4. Ray Gillen replacing Glenn Hughes 5. Tony "the Cat" Martin replacing Ray Gillen 6. Ronnie James Dio (again) replacing Tony "the Cat" Martin 7. Tony "the Cat" Martin (again) replacing Ronnie James Dio

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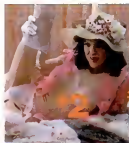
PHOTOGRAPH BY ALPHONSE TELYMONDE

SPIN 81



Six Slogans That Might Have Been More Effective Than "Vote or Die"

1. "It's like voting for *American Idol*, except for president"
2. "First ten million voters get three free downloads"
3. "You know what happens in those voting booths? It's hot!"
4. "Choose or else no booze"
5. "Vote the Munster, not the monkey"
6. "Vote or your next drinking hookup becomes a baby"



Seven Places Where Courtney Love Has Exposed Her Breasts

1. As a young stripper at the Los Angeles Club Jumbo's Clown Room
2. In *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, 1996
3. At the Winnipeg EdgeFest, Canada, 1999
4. On the red carpet at the Golden Globe Awards, Los Angeles, 2000
5. At a photo shoot for *Q* magazine, London, 2002
6. On *The Late Show With David Letterman*, New York City, 2004
7. Outside a Wendy's in New York City, 2004



Ten Former Child Actors Who Have Tried to Rock

1. Corey Feldman (has released several albums, including 2002's *Former Child Actor*)
2. *Family Ties'* Tina Yothers (fronted a band called Jaded)
3. *Family Ties'* Brian Bonsall (led a skate-punk band called the Late Bloomers)
4. All in the *Family's* Danielle Brisebois (released two solo albums in the '90s and sang backup for Kelly Clarkson)
5. The *Courtship of Eddie's Father's* Brandon Cruz (fronted the California punk band Dr. Know and the post-Jello Biafra Dead Kennedys)
6. *Lost in Space's* Bill Mumy (had a late-'70s novelty hit, "Fish Heads," as half of Barnes & Barnes)
7. *What's Happening!!'s* David Hollander (DJ who has two funk collections on Emperor Norton and Motel Records)
8. *The Brady Bunch's* Robbie Rist, a.k.a. Cousin Oliver (drummer for forgotten L.A. indie rockers the Last and several other power-pop bands)
9. *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air's* Tatyana Ali (released a solo R&B album in 1998)
10. *Saved by the Bell's* Dustin Diamond (bassist for prog-rockers Salty the Pocketknife)

- ### Nine Most Overused Rockn' Expressions (2005 Edition)
1. Shot nine times
 2. Not technically a mash-up of the Beatles and Jay-Z
 3. Devendra Banhart
 4. Their triumphant Coachella performance
 5. Crunktastic
 6. Neo-new wave
 7. Emo saviors
 8. Roller-skating jams
 9. Their best album since *All That You Can't Leave Behind*

12 Rock Stars Who Never Bump Into at Supercuts

1. Michael Stipe
2. Billy Corgan
3. Rob Halford
4. Fred Durst
5. Moby
6. Maynard James Keenan (*Tool*)
7. Sinéad O'Connor
8. Nick Oliveri (*Queens of the Stone Age*)
9. Frank Black
10. David Drakman (*Disturbed*)
11. Blair Sheehan (*the Jealous Sound*)
12. Scott Ian (*Anthrax*)

Ten Best Ashlee Simpson Excuses So Far

1. Somebody cued the wrong vocal track
2. Drummer started playing the wrong song
3. Acid reflux
4. Blew out voice at an earlier taping
5. Never used a backing track before
6. Blahoutie jig dancing choreography often leaves her out of breath
7. No monitors during Orange Bowl performance
8. Oklahoma Sooners fans knew she was rooting for USC
9. Nobody told her that when she got a No. 1 album hit MTV show, magazine covers, and publicity appearances, she'd have to actually, like, sing
10. "I'm Jessica Simpson's freakin' sister—what did you expect?"

666

Six Extreme Metal Bands That Could Be Mistaken for Flavors of Herbal Tea

1. Celtic Frost
2. Autumn Leaves
3. Moonspell
4. Memory Garden
5. Jacob's Dream
6. Heavenwood



Five Hideous Album Covers 1. Herbie Mann, *Push Push* 2. Royal Trux, *Sweet Sixteen* 3. Creed, *Weathered* 4. Jim O'Rourke, *Eureka* 5. Rush, *Hemispheres*



Five Things That Would Be Different Had the Civil War Been Fought to Free Audio Slaves (as Opposed to Regular Slaves)

1. Emancipation Proclamation would include disparaging references to rap rock
2. Abraham Lincoln would have become the 16th president... of Sony Music
3. Tom Morello would be associated less with avant-garde guitar, more with advent of the telegraph
4. Jefferson Davis ousted as president of Confederate states; replaced by Zack de la Rocha
5. With its 600,000 casualties, the War Between the States would be certified "gold"

Ten Good Bands Cursed With Terrible Names
 Possam Dixon
 Crabbby Appleton
 American Music Club
 Dogs Die in Hot Cars
 Death Cab for Cutie
 Vornit Launch
 Enuff Z'Nuff
 The Disembodiment Plan
 Boss Hog
 You Am I

12 Musicians Missing Parts of Their Bodies



1. Def Leppard drummer Rick Allen (arm)
2. Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi (some fingertips)
3. R&B singer Houston (eye)
4. The Geto Boys' Bushwick Bill (eye)
5. The Barbarians' Victor "Mouly" Moulton (hand)
6. '50s and '60s session drummer Sandy Nelson (foot and part of leg)
7. Link Wray (lung)
8. Dr. Hook (eye)
9. Ry Cooder (eye)
10. Jazz-folk singer/songwriter John Martyn (leg)
11. Jerry Garcia (finger)
12. Shane MacGowan (teeth)

Ten Songs That Are Almost Certainly About Cunnilingus

1. "Canary," Liz Phair ("I jump when you circle the cherry / I sing like a good canary / I come when called")
2. "Rider," Will Oldham ("Lady's got a box pressed into my face / And a belt of beads draped around her waist / I flex my neck and lose my sight")
3. "Just Like Honey," the Jesus and Mary Chain
4. "All My Life," Foo Fighters ("Hey, don't let it go to waste / I love it but I hate the taste... over and over down on my knees")
5. "Sugar Walls," Sheena Easton
6. "How Many Licks?" Lil' Kim
7. "Ring My Bell," Anita Ward
8. "Going Down," the Stone Roses
9. "Downtown," SWV
10. "Death Valley '69," Sonic Youth

...And Eight That Almost Certainly Aren't (but Could Be)

1. "Welcome to the Jungle," Guns N' Roses 2. "I'm Goin' Down," Bruce Springsteen 3. "Man in the Box," Alice in Chains 4. "Fall at Your Feet," Crowded House 5. "Downtown," Petula Clark 6. "Down on Me," Juliana Hatfield 7. "Southbound," the Allman Brothers 8. "I'm Going Down in Jesus' Name," the Silver Gate Quartet

Seven Musicians Who Might Have Made It as Professional Athletes

1. Master P (tried out for the Toronto Raptors)
2. MC Hammer (former batboy for the Oakland A's)
3. Metallica's Lars Ulrich (former Top Ten junior tennis player in Denmark)
4. Buck 65, a.k.a. Richard Terfry (scouted by the New York Yankees)
5. Chris Isaak (former amateur boxer)
6. James Brown (his pro boxing and baseball dreams were quashed by a leg injury)
7. Jack Johnson (former pro surfer)

Seven Professional Athletes Who Tried to Make It as Musicians

1. Miami Heat center Shaquille O'Neal (released several dreadful rap albums)
2. Olympic track and field star Carl Lewis (made awful '80s synth-pop)
3. Pitcher Scott Radinsky (fronts SoCal punk band Pulley)
4. Indiana Pacers forward Ron Artest (has a rap album forthcoming)
5. Pitcher Jack McDowell (fronts forgettable alt-rockers Stickfigure)
6. Former World Cup soccer star Alexi Lalas (spewed a few albums of mediocre alt-pop)
7. Boxer Oscar de la Hoya (is a Latin pop vocalist)



Mel Gibson's Ten Desert Island Discs

1. "Jesus is a Good Ole Boy," Cal Smith
2. "Jesus Was Way Cool," King Missile
3. "Drop Kick Me, Jesus," Bobby Bare
4. "Chocolate Jesus," Tom Waits
5. "Jesus the Missing Years," John Prine
6. "Is Jesus Your Pal?" GusGus
7. "I Have Forgiven Jesus," Morrissey
8. "Jesus Thinks You're a Jerk," Frank Zappa
9. "You Don't Know Jesus," Mogwai
10. "Jesus, Where's the Sugar?" Christian Death

The Five Most Illegible Metal Band Logos



A: Nuclear Death B: Entrained C: Ingressive D: Mutilation E: Bonnamer

13 Songs That Are Probably (or Definitely) About Winona Ryder

- "Nobody Girl"**
Ryan Adams
- "Rollerskate Skinny"**
Old 97's
- "Never Recover"**
Dave Pirner
- "Winona's Big Brown Beaver"**
Primus
- "Winona"**
Matthew Sweet
- "Winona Ryder"**
Unrest
- "Winona Ryder"**
Edie Sedgwick
- "Winona Ryder"**
the Hollycarbins
- "Winona Ryder"**
Heft
- "Winona"**
Drop Nineteens
- "Winona"**
Quickspace
- "Why Winona Why"**
The Kennedys
- "(She Looks Like) Winona Ryder"**
Ridel High



Seven Things You Can Do During John Bonham's Drum Solo on "Moby Dick" From *The Song Remains the Same*

1 Listen to "Stairway to Heaven" three times

2 Read the first chapter of *Moby-Dick*

3 "Shag" a "bird"

4 Fish for mud sharks from your hotel window

5 Silkscreen your own BONZO ROCKS! T-shirt

6 Listen to all 21 songs on the Locust's debut album; go to the bathroom

7 Learn to play the drums



Six Shameful Awards Show Dustups

- 1 2000 Source Awards: After a performance by Lil' Kim, fights break out in the audience, then spill onto the stage before being broken up by the cops.
- 2 2004 Vibe Awards: Before Dr. Dre accepts a lifetime achievement award, an audience member sucker punches him. Young Buck comes to Dre's defense, allegedly stabbing the assailant and initiating a melee.
- 3 2002 MTV Video Music Awards: Eminem refuses to be interviewed by Triumph the Insult Comic Dog, shoving the puppet and standing idly by as a member of his posse tosses handler Robert Smigel's notes into the air.
- 4 2003 BET Awards: After Snoop Dogg is dropped off at the ceremony, authorities descend, and three men are arrested for wearing body armor.
- 5 2002 BET Awards: During a commercial break, Suge Knight finds a seat near Snoop Dogg and allegedly taunts him. Host Steve Harvey intervenes before punches are thrown.
- 6 1998 Jazz Awards: At a party following the ceremony, critic Stanley Crouch punches the president of the Jazz Journalists Association, Howard Mandel. Pianist Matthew Shipp steps in, calling Crouch an "Uncle Tom" and a "loser." They're separated before things escalate.

One Sign That the Mash-Up Trend May Have Run Its Course

Yes vs. Sir Mix-A-Lot, "Owner of a Lovely Butt"



Five Reasons Kanye West Ain't All That

1. Rapping with your jaw wired shut may be hard, but it's not like he got shot or anything.
2. Considering who got reelected president, writing a song about how Jesus rules is not exactly a radical statement.
3. The whole sped-up soul song thing is cute, but let's move on.
4. Cam'ron still looks better in pink 5. John Mayer

By Charles Aaron, Kyle Anderson, Andrew Beaujon, Doug Brod, Dave Izkoff, Jacob Kallish, Chuck Klosterman, Sarah Lewitinn, David Peisner, Brian Raftery, Ira Robbins, Marc Spitz, and Shannon Zimmerman



Ready to

Rumble

Surrounded by a new gang, and without sidekick Nick Oliveri, Queens of the Stone Age honcho Josh Homme has a ferocious new album and a good-natured wisecrack for every occasion. But if you wanna get personal, be prepared to duck.

Josh Homme is way bigger than you—that's why he's sitting hunched and fidgety, in a red booth at a Los Angeles family-style Mexican restaurant. But this isn't an unusual position for Homme; he never likes to get too comfortable—and that goes for his music, as well. The 31-year-old guitarist is the heart of the band called Queens of the Stone Age, and right now he's beating like crazy: Their fourth album, *Lullabies to Paralyze*, is a month away from hitting the streets. Later this week, he'll codirect the video for the first single, "Little Sister," and he's already produced—for his own label, Rekords Rekords—the second album by side project Eagles of Death Metal, where he trades guitar picks for drumsticks. Plus, he's rehearsing the Queens eight hours a day for a European tour (which he later had to cancel due to a lung infection that left him coughing up blood in a Paris hotel room).

"We pump each other...hard," says the snickering, six-foot-five Homme, his reddish hair like a Sunkist soda waterfall. "But it's fun to do. We change the songs around and all that stuff. [Otherwise] you'd get bored and wanna kill yourself." The inspiration for Homme's intense work ethic was indefatigable hardcore pioneers Black Flag—the band he favored as a kid in the sweltering, waterless fish tank that is Palm Desert.

Yeah, I may be overcompensating for naming my band Queens, but what are you gonna do about it? Josh Homme (third from left) with Troy Van Leeuwen, Joey Castillo, Dan Druff, and Mark Lanegan

By Sacha Jenkins
Photograph by Sean Murphy

The 'Star' is the perfect little ride for a rocker—the vehicle you'd expect the greaser pirate to sail off in. But that's the thing: Homme prefers the unexpected. Just when you think he's Tommy Lee, he gets all Busta Rhymes on your ass and goes for the Hemi. He likes to keep everyone guessing, including himself—which explains why his songs sound like they're hula-hooping on the lip of the Grand Canyon, as if he's holding on tight to every chug-chugging power chord, daring the desert wind to knock him off.



While my guitar gently shreds: Homme in Denver, 2002

The two buds graduated from the desert and found new loves and friends—and enemies—around the globe. But after a grueling, year-plus stint supporting *Deaf on the Road*, Homme booted Oliveri from the band for reasons he won't specify. There have been suggestions, though—Oliveri's wild, drugstore-crowdy partying had developed a self-destructive edge, with him throwing bottles at audiences and getting the band banned from hotels. Homme's wisecracking demeanor, however, recedes when talking about such personal matters—he definitely isn't discussing his relationship with Brody Dalle, the Distillers frontwoman who left her Rancid-fronting husband, Tim Armstrong, for the king of Queens. (Dalle declined to be interviewed for this story.)

At the moment, Homme's current group of Queens—drummer Joey Castillo, guitarist/keyboardist Troy Van Leeuwen, and touring bassist and former QOTSA guitarist tech Dan Druff—are gathering at Mates Studios in the San Fernando Valley to run through the new *Paralyze* numbers. Hollow-bodied guitars, conduits for the open-air sound that makes the Queens' sound rule, are everywhere. But the most notable musicians who worked on *Deaf*—drummer Dave Grohl (who's back recording with Foo Fighters) and Oliveri—are nowhere to be found.

"Look," Hommi says, "I was at Nick's house last night. But I don't feel any obligation to really explain myself. I feel more like, well, mostly, *fuck you*—because it is my friend. We're not playing together because of *none of your business*. That covers more bases to me. People don't really care—it's just something for the moment. But I do."

After his dismissal, Oliveri sounded off, claiming that the band had been "poisoned by hunger for power" and that without him it was "Queens Lite." Now he's more contrite: "My relationship with Josh is all good. The new Queens record kicks ass. I can't help but think and know that I could've added something to it, but that's old Queens shit. Hopefully, we'll make some new music soon."

"True brothers can fight and kick the shit outta each other, but they're still brothers at the end of the day," says Van Leeuwen. "We have tons of love for Nick. Things change. We might not be here for the next record. Who fuckin' "



This is why they called it "stoner rock":
Homme as a member of Kyuss, early '90s

Queens of the Stone Age may be rock 'n' roll's answer to OutKast. First of all, the band wasn't built by one man alone. As André "3000" Benjamin had a partner in Antwon "Big Boy" Patton, Homme had the same in bassist Nick Oliveri; the pair have known each other—like Boi and André—since they were teens. (Nick was a Kyuss monster too.) And like OutKast's devotees, Queens' fans come in all types—from malletheads to punks to Catholic schoolgirls to sensitive screamo boys. Homme even wore the artist-businessman hat like Boi—dealing with tour and video-shoot particulars, developing other artists: Oliveri, meanwhile, like Mr. 3000, filled the irrational, charismatic, self-absorbed artist role. It was a push-and-pull dynamic that gave the outfit a special balance.

The two buds graduated from the desert and found new loves and the globe. But after a grueling, year-plus road, Homme booted Oliveri from the specify. There have been suggestions, a store-cowboy partying had developed a him throwing bottles at audiences and get-out. Homme's wisecracking demeanor, noting about such personal matters—he deflating relationship with Brody Dalle, the Distillers' acid-fronting husband, Tim Armstrong, declined to be interviewed for this story.)

current group of Queens—drummer Joey Jordison, lead guitarist Troy Van Leeuwen, and touring bassist Dan Druff—are gathering at Mates & Valleys to run through the new *Paralyzer*. The band's live shows are a conduit for the open-air sound that defines the group's music. But the most notable Queens of the New Year—drummer Dave Grohl (who's back in the band with Pearl Jam), bassist Chris D'Amico, and Oliveri—are nowhere to be found.

was at Nick's house last night. But I don't really explain myself. I feel more like, well, *fuck you*—because it is my friend. We're staying together because of *none of your business*. That covers more bases to me. People really care—it's just something for the moment. But I do."

After his dismissal, Oliveri sounded off, saying that the band had been "poisoned by greed for power" and that without him it was "Shins Lite." Now he's more contrite: "My relationship with Josh is all good. The new Shins record kicks ass. I can't help but think now that I could've added something to it, that old Queens shit. Hopefully, we'll have some new music soon."

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of the day," says Van Leeuwen. "We have
of love for Nick. Things change. We might
be here for the next record. Who fuckin'

knows? You can't take it for granted that this thing is gonna be around forever. That's the philosophy we're all sharing."

That philosophy has meant numerous projects outside the Queens castle. Oliveri has his band, Mondo Generator; Joey Castillo has drummed with Danzig and Eagles of Death Metal; former Screaming Trees frontman Mark Lanegan, who has sung lead on a number of Queens songs, has released several solo records and also records with Eagles; Van Leeuwen has played guitar with A Perfect Circle.

"I think it's a real refreshing thing," says Castillo. "You're able to do something and not be worried about 'People are gonna get pissed.'"

Says Homme: "I consider Queens the hive—the home base, you know? And if I and everyone in the band want to scratch that itch, you go back to Queens and you bring back all the stuff you've learned out there." Humbling experiences, says Homme, make for better songwriting. Which explains why he was willing to get in a van with Eagles of Death Metal last year, even road-managing the whole affair.

"If you form certain habits that involve not noticing what's out [in the world], you're missing something," says Homme. "I think that's

how writer's block happens—because you're not looking anymore. And you go, 'Whoa, why can't I write?' And it's because you can't look. It's about constantly ruffling your feathers with new situations."

Such situations are nothing new to Homme, who endured a much-publicized brawl in New York's East Village last year. He allegedly knocked a guy out cold (making the *New York Post's* Page Six gossip column) in retaliation for some nasty things that were said about Dalle and another friend. Homme had to cancel a gig in Philly—his hand was too swollen from connecting with human skin and bone.

"There's been a million times where I've seen him take the high road, where I would have gone fuckin' haywire," says Lanegan. "To his credit, he handled it all like a man. There were times when I was ready to pick up a gun."

"I don't start fights," Homme says in his defense. "But I do have red hair, you know? I've read that when you're a redheaded kid, people have a tendency to see if they can pick on you. But I don't let people pick on me. And I don't like to see people get picked on."

It could also be suggested that Queens' willingness to rumble has had something to do with their willingness to indulge in judgment-altering substances (maybe Oliveri was just the first to lose control). "I'll take any free shit!" Homme offers with a sly grin. "I do notice that people are on different drugs in different towns, though. People will go, 'Dude, you wanna get stoned?' in one town, and in another it'll be like, 'You want some quaaludes?' You know you're in the wrong town when they're like, 'Safety-orange spray paint! Hey, you wanna huff?'"

Lullabies to Paralyze sounds like the dudes were on something nice when they recorded it. Cut over a measly five weeks, it's all the way live, with tunes like "The Blood Is Love" recorded in just one take. The crunchy riffs are as concise and speedy as they were on *Deaf*, and the melodies more pure and earnest (Homme's floating lyrics are especially hypnotic). But there's also a decadent, scary undercurrent. At times, *Lullabies* seems to be a celebration of the mean, harsh side of the desert—serenading the cultures that stalk and scavenge for carrion and shouting out the cactuses that stand tall and go on living in isolation.

"I love the sound of their guitars," says Garbage's Shirley Manson, who, along with Dalle, lends her voice to "You've Got a Killer Scene." "And the sound of the record is really quite dark. A lot of records today are so bright, the way they're mastered and everything." She pauses, searching for an image to capture *Lullabies*. Finally, she blurts out: "It's like the horn of a sexy slut!"

For, um, example, there's the grungy blues number "Burn the Witch" (featuring ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons) and the Zeppelin-esque epic "Someone's in the Wolf." "Tangled Up in Plaid" is both haunting and jaunty, with odd piano stabs and an unnerving, swirling solo, while "In My Head" is an infectious, if desperate, pop tart ("Keep on playing our favorite song / Turn it up while you're gone / It's all I've got when you're in my head, and you're in my head, so I need it," bellows Homme).

And, of course, "Everybody Knows That You're Insane" has journalists wondering if he's trying to call out his old bass-playing chum a little. "So far it's been like, 'Is that about Nick?' And I'm like, 'Didn't you think I'd think you'd ask me that?'" Homme says sagely. "And it's not. It's about situations where..." His voice trails off. "I'm not comfortable fully explaining myself. Music has always been a way of playing what I'm not saying."

Then, suddenly, Homme looks puzzled, as if he's struggling to decide how much is safe to reveal. "There are moments," he says at last, "where instead of saying things outright, you go, 'Well, let's burn the witch' instead."

And who's the witch? A horned, sexy slut perhaps? One thing's for sure, as long as Homme has Queens of the Stone Age to speak for him, he ain't telling. ■

Footmen of the Stone Age

A rogue's gallery of Queens collaborators

By Kyle Anderson



Nick Oliveri

Who: Rains singer and QOTSA cofounder
What: Plays and sings on first three Queens albums; also Homme's bandmate in Kyuss and consigliere for the Desert Sessions side project



Mark Lanegan

Who: Former voice of Screaming Trees
What: Sings lead on *Rated R's* "In the Fade" and several Songs for the Deaf tracks; also sings lead on "Lullabies," which opens the new album



Dave Grohl

Who: Former Nirvana drummer turned Foo Fighters frontman
What: All the drums on Songs for the Deaf are Grohl's



Dean Ween

Who: For all indie-folk jokers, Ween's Queens. Added guitars to Songs for the Deaf and *Lullabies* to Paralyze, as well as various Desert Sessions



Brody Dalle

Who: Sister to all-business punkers the Distillers and Homme's girlfriend
What: Adds vocals to "You Got a Killer Scene" on *Lullabies* to Paralyze



PJ Harvey

Who: Indie's ethereal-siren
What: Collaborated with Homme on Desert Sessions 9 & 10, including the single "Crawl Home"



Rob Halford

Who: Judas Priest frontman
What: Sang the "On-a-bus" chorus on *Rated R's* "Feel Good Hit of the Summer"



Shirley Manson

Who: Frontwoman for techno-rockers Garbage
What: Sings on "You Got a Killer Scene" in *Rated R's* "Feel Good Hit of the Summer"



Billy Gibbons

Who: Quaintest (or legend) Texas blues-rock band ZZ Top
What: Plays on *Lullabies* "Burn the Witch"



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Ponky for Life

Some call it a cult. Some call it the coolest dance-music label in the world. But for the dedicated parents and devoted drunks behind Kompakt Records, their DIY aesthetic and religious belief in techno are simply a way of life. Tucked away in Cologne, Germany, they're building a global scene from the ground up. /////////////// By Adrienne Day

In Germany it's all "fun, fun, fun on the autobahn." At least that's what Kraftwerk would have you believe. But as a passenger in Ada's tiny Opel, it's closer to life-threatening. As the speedometer marches toward the 150 kph mark, Ada, 31, a rising star in Germany's techno scene, notices my uneasy fixation on the dash. "Am I going too fast?" she asks, drawing deeply on her cigarette as the neon lights around us fuse into a blur caused by what, at this speed, appears to be atomic fission.

It's Saturday night in western Germany, and we're looking for *eine kleine nachtmusik*. Ada (née Michela Dippel) will perform songs from her new album, *Blondie*, recently released on Areal, a label that her best friend, Metope, runs out of his apartment. Ada and Metope both live in Cologne, the unofficial capital of German

"minimal techno" and home of mega-indie Kompakt Records, which distributes Areal, as well as dozens of other labels.

Tonight's gig is 45 minutes from Cologne in Düsseldorf, where, in 1974, Kraftwerk released "Autobahn," a simple ode to the road that would jump-start the evolution of techno, officially "born" in Detroit some ten years later. Metope (Michael Schwanen) is feeling a little under the weather, but as Ada's sometime manager, he's gamely along for the ride. "Normally, I'm up for getting wasted," he says from the backseat, firing up his 84th cigarette of the evening. "But tonight, no drinking!" As he puffs away, the stereo shifts from a track by Strokes wannabes Razorlight into "I'd Rather Dance With You" by the Norwegian band Kings of Convenience, which segues into a clunky seersawing—or

(1) Kompakt brings the techno-soul back to Detroit; (2) Michael Mayer at work; (3) this shirt was a lot more lyrical before being translated; (4) minimal techno, maximal bliss; (5) Mayer; (6) in the trenches at a Mayer show; (7) Ada finessees the decks; (8) label honcho Wolfgang Voigt; (9) enrapt fans at a Mayer show; (10) part of Ada's aggressive publicity campaign



(1) A Kompakt office lunch; (2) Kompakt employees are never happier than when inventorying new ponks; (3) Ada and fellow DJ/techno artist Sascha Funke; (4) Reinhard Voigt has won six straight office bowling titles



"schaffel"—techno beat. "What is this?" Metope asks. "Our own track!" Ada exclaims, turning it up and laughing.

At ten o'clock we pull up to Harpune, housed in an ugly, squat edifice that looks more like the Düsseldorf DMV than a raging hot spot. As Ada lifts her gear from the trunk, I realize how tiny she is. Born in the same small town near Frankfurt where Elvis Presley met Priscilla in 1959, Ada is blonde and blue-eyed, with cheekbones like a machete. Dressed in a Blondie T-shirt, a plaid button-up, some weird fusion of Converse sneakers and Mary Jane pumps, and a frumpy coat to protect against the chilly winter air, she could pass for a very small, very hip lumberjack.

The club doesn't start filling up until 1 A.M. Till then, we spend the time drinking and chatting, dancing to the warm "Cologne" version of techno—which sounds a bit like someone saying *ponky, ponky, ponky, ponky* over and over again at a tempered gait. Sascha Funke, a one-time Kompakt artist, is DJ'ing after Ada, and we engage in a casual argument over which of the Berlin-based producer Maurizio's "M" series is presently ripping through the loudspeakers. I think it's M-4; Funke swears by M-5. (It turns out to be M-4.5.) When you've got nothing ahead of you but *ponky* for six hours, details like this matter a great deal.

Ada eventually takes over at about 2 A.M., and the fog machines make their rolling debut. The dance floor is soon overrun with people who whoop and holler when she

picks up the mic to sing. And as her brilliant track "The Red Shoes" makes its way into the mix, the faithful start ringing the booth, holding their arms aloft like an überstylish pack of Wim Wenders' earthbound angels.

At a time when most dance music (especially of the superstar DJ variety) is about as popular as Hitler humor, minimal techno's laid-back beauty has touched a nerve with global refugees of Generation E hitting their mid-30s. And if Cologne is its capital, Kompakt—which last year celebrated its 100th release, with *Kompakt 100*—is its booming growth industry. The label has more than doubled its staff over the past two years, adopted a four-story building as its headquarters, and upped its U.S. sales by 150 percent. (A tour this past February sold out venues in New York, Minneapolis, and Chicago.) By "compacting" their micro-maze of tiny labels and once-chaotic business structure—studios, offices, record store, and distribution center are now neatly stacked under one roof—Kompakt exerts a DIY integrity that jibes more with the ascetic business sense of American indie rock than dance music's hedonistic bent.

"There's an interconnectedness, and that's what makes them totally different from other [larger] electronic-music labels," says Richie Hawtin, the Berlin-based techno producer and globe-trotting DJ. "They have a long-term perspective on building up artists and artist-run labels, and finding a balance between the music and the marketplace. It's made up of

autonomous individuals, but collectively they work together like a family."

One of Kompakt's owners, producers, and high-profile DJs, Michael Mayer, 33, explains their business strategy: "It feels best for us to sell our 'eggs' directly to the customer, fresh from the garden to the plate." Wolfgang Voigt, the label's co-owner, adds, "When 2,000 people buy your record without any [recognizable] name on it, you know you're doing something right."

Such risk-taking has led to trends like "schaffel techno," spawned by Wolfgang's passion for glam rock. T. Rex's "Hot Love" in particular ("I always wanted to be the German Marc Bolan," he claims). And there's never a shortage of diverse sounds circulating on Kompakt's roster: Ada's housey synth-pop debut, *Blondie*; Jörg Burger's new ambient project, *Triola*; melodic deep-throated musings from Superpitcher (see last year's *Here Comes Love*); a full-length from Mayer (the surprisingly anthemic, trance-fueled *Touch*); and Justus Köhncke's stellar *Doppelleben*—which boasts tongue-in-cheek "schlock" pop and disco tracks sandwiched between dance-floor bangers like "Timecode." (If that's a lot of info to take in, the excellent Kompakt web site [www.kompakt-net.de] will soon branch out into techno iTunes territory, offering MP3s for purchase online.)

The Kompakt story began in 1993, when

Mayer met his future business partners—Wolfgang Voigt, Wolfgang's brother Reinhard, Jürgen Paape, and Jörg Burger—at a record store they were running called Delerium. "I was the shop's first customer," Mayer recalls. "And I totally shouted at them because their selection was a disaster." But his obstreperous behavior landed him a job on the sales floor, and six months later, a partnership with the fledgling company. Delerium was a Frankfurt-based franchise and generally favored the better-selling hard-trance labels, so the small Cologne outpost soon developed its own musical identity. "We liked stripped-down minimal stuff—LFO, Tricky Disco, some Detroit techno, early Basic Channel." So in 1998 the five partners decided to set up their own business. Kompakt was born.

It thrived as a two-room startup until 2003,

when the crew moved to their current location. Today it's hard to see the fly-by-night operation within the framework of the steely Kompakt superstructure nestled on a beautiful leafy street in old Cologne. ("For years we were the kind of guys who would open a bottle of beer before working," says Wolfgang.) Kompakt's main office space is loftlike and inviting, with windows lining three of the walls and large potted plants dotting the room. The music store and storage space downstairs fully exercise the Teutonic passion for extreme organization; records are filed by region, label, even catalog number. Mayer handles distribution and is the big-name DJ, with official residencies in London, Geneva, and Barcelona. Wolfgang, 44, is Kompakt's unofficial chairman and "vision guy." Paape, 37, runs the record store and maintains the label's Dewey Decimal-like record library. In their spare time most of the Kompakt braintrust (except Paape and Wolfgang, who prefer to remain behind the scenes) produce tracks and DJ almost every weekend in Europe, the States, and Japan. Reinhard, 36, also DJs and doubles as the most exuberant bookkeeper in the business of keeping books. "It's wonderful for me!" he enthuses, completely serious. "It is *fascinating* to figure out year-end taxes."

Kompakt employs a professional cook to make a daily vegan lunch for all 23 employees. There is no smoking allowed anywhere in Kompakt's offices (a very big deal in Europe). It seems like a fantastic place to work, and though I've heard rumors of Kompakt having a "hairstyle code" and a cult-like insularity, the only thing that smacks of brainwashing is the schmaltzy '60s pop *schlager* record that Wolfgang is forcing his staff to endure as they diligently type away.

"For us, techno is not just a trend," Wolfgang says as we sit upstairs sipping carbonated *apfelsaft* in the Kompakt "rec" room, which has a sound system, punching bag, and slightly deflated yoga ball. "You live sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll, and eventually you get old, fat, slow, boring, and ugly. We have found a way to grow old with techno in a seri-

ous and credible way. We saw magazines come to techno [in the mid-'90s], and then they got bored, and two years later they're back to rock. But for us, it's different. Techno is our life. It's still the most important musical language without words."

That idealism notwithstanding, it's been a difficult week for Kompakt. Bouncing back from a 5 A.M. set time gets harder with age, and for the mostly middle-aged Kompakt crew, keeping the party going into the wee hours can verge on masochistic. Forty-three-year-old Jörg Burger, the only Kompakt producer to experience any real Stateside label support (Matador released 1998's *Burger/Ink* collaboration with Wolfgang Voigt), admits it's hard to have a normal life when you're a techno daddo. "There's nothing as terrible as a Monday morning," he notes, adding that his 12-year-old daughter papers her walls with Britney posters and can't stand her dad's music. "Nowadays, the time I normally stand onstage is the time when I'm nearly getting up to take care of my daughter." He shakes his

already 10,000 DJs," he says. "For awhile there were giant raves every weekend in Germany; it got very professional, and very cold. But what's happening worldwide is that a new scene is starting to develop, based on the ruins of the '90s rave boom. Our audience is growing. Not with large steps, but with stable ones."

It's Tuesday, not a big party night in Cologne, so the crew heads for the bowling alley instead of the club. We order a pitcher of beer; Wolfgang asks for wine. At first, the game is neck-and-neck. But then things head south for the American. Wolfgang knocks down a strike as I throw my third gutter ball. "So, now, why are you failing?" he says archly, more confident than a man sipping Chablis in a bowling alley has any right to be.

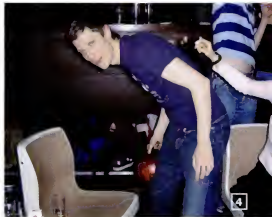
But as a bottle of Jägermeister makes the rounds, things fall apart for the home team, as well. Reinhard's girlfriend lofts her ball like she's aiming to sink a clown in a dunk tank. Wolfgang bends over and shoots backward from between his legs, then collapses in

//// "You live sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll, and eventually you get old, fat, slow, boring, and ugly. We have found a way to grow old with techno in a serious and credible way."

head. "Two weeks ago I started a set at 5 A.M. How can you do this without chemicals? It's absolutely impossible." On my second day in Cologne, Metope checks himself into the hospital with what turns out to be a potentially fatal heart condition. (He recovers and is discharged a week later.) And on the day of our interview, Mayer arrives sporting a blue brace on his left knee. "The doctor said to let him know if I have any nosebleeds," he says, deeply puzzled.

This week Mayer is favoring a goofy yellow sweatshirt that says MONSIEUR in shiny black letters, a flourish of the affable oddness that's also displayed in his hilarious sales sheets. Kompakt promo linguo often reads like something off a bottle of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap: COMPETENT THREE-TRACKER WITH PLAUSIBLE WEIRDNESS. OR, CRACKING TECHNO/ELECTROTRASH TRACKS. SAWING UNTIL THE FRUITS FALL OFF THE BRANCH. FEEL FREE TO THROW WITH MUD!

Over the last decade, many labels and artists have moved to Germany's capital, Berlin—where rent is low and the *ponky* fast, cheap, and frequently out of control. Cologne, by contrast, is relaxed and easygoing. Despite the city's one million inhabitants, its club scene is tiny, though the legendary Studio 672 club boasts a healthy weekly Friday-night party. But Mayer couldn't care less about being in the middle of the mix. "In Berlin there were



a sulky lump. As a professional, competitive force, Team Kompakt is a mess. But in the end, no one seems to care: Wolfgang figures out a preposterously large sum total by adding up everybody's scores, and we leave the alley flush with victory.

It may only be a game, but it reveals a depth of spirit that has nourished this music scene and kept it alive, and thriving, for more than 15 years in the underground. "I don't want a great border between work and life," says Wolfgang, polishing his mantra like a man who has finally found a home in a place he never actually left. "It's life, it's the family. That's why we live like we live." He smiles. "For us, techno is the end of all questions." ■

ADRIENNE DAVY



H e ' s L



It's been 25 years since the making of Joy Division's post-punk milestone, *Closer*, and the suicide of Ian Curtis. Now, those closest to the singer tell the full story in their own words.

• • •
By Brian Raftery



Slave to the
rhythms: Ian Curtis
in 1979

ost

Ian Curtis had plenty of things on

his troubled mind when he entered London's Britannia Row Studios in the winter of 1980. For the past few rattling months, he had suffered epileptic seizures onstage; he'd detached himself from his wife, Deborah, and their infant daughter, Natalie; he'd taken up with a young Belgian woman named Annik Honoré; and he'd fretted about his band's first tour of the United States.

Somehow, out of all of this worriment, he and his partners in the Manchester-based band Joy Division—drummer Stephen Morris, bassist Peter Hook, and guitarist Bernard Sumner—recorded *Closer*, the grandiose follow-up to their 1979 debut, *Unknown Pleasures*, and had their atmospheric dance track "Love Will Tear Us Apart" waiting in the wings. Applying the liberating sloppiness of punk to the precise synth sounds of kraut rock, *Closer* is an otherworldly album, cloaking you in the unsettled seaminess of night. It is ghostly and austere ("Heart and Soul"), yet rhythmic and taut ("Isolation"). It was the career-defining release for not only the band, but also Factory Records, the fledgling label started by eccentric impresario Tony Wilson.

Sadly, Curtis wouldn't live to see *Closer* become one of the benchmark recordings of the post-punk era: He committed suicide the following May, at the age of 23, just two months before the album's release. A quarter-century after his death, the impact of Curtis and *Closer* loom large, and his cult includes peers like Robert Smith, U2, and David Bowie, as well as younger followers such as Interpol and Bloc Party. His life story will reach an even wider audience with the release of *Control*, a biopic directed by Anton Corbijn and adapted from *Touching From a Distance*, his widow's 1995 memoir. Here, the surviving band members and others recount the album's creation—and Curtis' personal dissolution.

• • •
The recording of *Closer* got underway in London's Britannia Row Studios on March 18, 1980, reuniting the band with *Unknown Pleasures*' famously erratic producer Martin Hannett. Known for his divisive strategies, Hannett forced the band to keep dusk-till-dawn hours; the group responded by sipping pints and pulling pranks.

PETER HOOK: We shared a flat [in London while recording]; we were always together. We had £150 a day to eat. And you either could eat or drink—you couldn't do both. What we did was find this kebab house where you could have a baby chicken and salad for £1.05, and that left you with enough money for a pint.

TONY WILSON: One night, the band and I drove to the flat they were



Ode to Joy: Stephen Morris, Curtis, Bernard Sumner, and Peter Hook in London, 1979

renting. When we got up the stairs and opened the door, everyone immediately, without a word, dispersed to their rooms. They ran off to check that nothing had been done to their rooms—that someone hadn't sawed off a leg of their bed or hadn't put salt in their cornflakes. Which was normal behavior for Joy Division, because practical joking was one of the core things that they did. So everyone had to spend ten minutes making sure no one put applesauce in their beds. Once they'd done that, we had a nice hour and a half, messing around and smoking joints.

When it was time to leave, Bernard sort of smiled and said, "Be careful. Don't die on the road"—a typical Bernard sort of salutation. But when we got out on the street, one of my group got to the van and just recoiled, with a scream, from the handle. They'd "jammed the handle"—smearing all the handles with jelly or jam. So we went, "Fucking hell, what are we going to do?"

Suddenly, the first egg, or plastic bag of water, or bag of flour, hit the street. And we looked up, and all the boys were poking their hands out the window—including Ian and Annik—just grinning and gently lobbing items at us. It was about five in the morning when we stopped at the service station halfway home, 100 miles up, and we got out of the van, and it's like, "Oh, fuck"—all this crap on our hands. That was typical Joy Division behavior.

nt



"It must have been hell in his head": Curtis at TJ's rehearsal room in Manchester, 1979

BERNARD SUMNER: The flat was split in two halves: Me and Ian were in one half with his girlfriend, and the rest of the band were in the other. She was a vegetarian, and Ian stopped eating meat, so everyone saw that as a sign of John and Yoko-ism. The band didn't like what was going on with his marriage, and [there was a question of] "Who's this girl coming into our space?"

HOOK: In those days, bands had to hire a Dolby technician [to come into the studio while you were recording]. We found the Dolby book and all the clients' phone numbers. So while Martin was fucking around, we'd go upstairs and ring up people like Siouxsie Sioux and go, "Is that Siouxsie Sioux? Fuck off!" It's three o'clock in the morning, and we're screaming at her, "Fuck off, you twat!" We called [British radio DJ] John Peel, too. Everyone was listed in this Dolby book. We used to phone up all the other groups in the middle of the night and tell them to fuck off. All those other groups we hated—we had them all. Ian thought it was hilarious.

Despite all the lighthearted distractions, Curtis' epilepsy and depression were taking their toll.

SUMNER: We did a concert with the Stranglers in London. Sometimes, when we stopped a song, he wouldn't stop dancing, and



Morris, Curtis, Hook, and Sumner in Manchester, 1979 (above); Sumner and Martin Hannett getting that "intricate web of tension and chaos" at a 1980 recording session



he ended up flailing into the drum kit. People thought it was part of the show, and Rob [Gretton, the band's manager] had to manhandle him back to the dressing room. When Ian was finished having a fit, he used to break down into tears. We didn't like to see him like that.

STEPHEN MORRIS: Ian was very ill. We felt helpless. I mean, if you saw someone that sick again in your life, you'd sit on them until they were better, or you'd bang the doctor's door down until he helped you.

Ian went to the doctors, and they'd just tell him, "Go to bed. Don't drink. Keep quiet. Be everything that you're not and want to be." He then did what any young person would do: He rebelled; he stayed up late; he'd get [drunk], and it just got worse and worse.

DEBORAH CURTIS: He told me—and he told Bernard—that he wanted to leave the band and do something more ordinary. He knew his lifestyle was exacerbating the epilepsy, and he didn't want to go to America because he was afraid of flying. He talked to me about all the people in music who had found other ways to get there. I don't think the band took his fear seriously.

He did have bouts of depression earlier. But around the time *Closer* was being recorded, it was a lot worse. He wasn't any fun at all then. I think to some extent he expected me having a baby to...I think he expected me to go into some kind of decline and to be more tied to the house. And it didn't happen like that. I found that being a mother was

"Most people's perception was that Ian's death made Joy Division massive, but it held us back from dominating the world." —Tony Wilson

very empowering. The more depressed he was, the more I had to come out of my shell. It's like it had the opposite effect on me than it did on Ian.

HOOK: The poor bastard. He really did have the weight of the world on him. There were a few occasions when he blacked out and smashed his head open on the sink. It must have been fucking hell in his head. I couldn't imagine. He had his mistress with him, his wife was home, and his relationships were crumbling. We were all living a lie, because we had to pretend.

LINDSAY READE (former wife of Tony Wilson): Annik wasn't a groupie girl at all. She was a very refined woman, very dignified. She and Ian had music in common. Annik had made a big contribution to music: She was involved with creating [Belgian label] Les Disques Du Crepuscule, and she arranged a gig for Joy Division in Belgium.

CURTIS: I think I was more confused. The band didn't talk to me because, obviously, they only knew what Ian told them. I must have looked like a jealous wife. If your friend tells you his wife's giving him a hard time, you tend to try and support him, don't you? You're not going to say to him, "Well, actually, it's the other way around."

HOOK: And then, in between, Martin Hannett was acting like the seventh goblin on the green.

MORRIS: One of Martin's quotes was, "My role as a producer is to create an intricate web of tension and chaos."

HOOK: You could put any band in the studio with Martin, they could have been getting on for 30 years, and you put them in the studio together, and he could split them up. That was his reputation. He was pretty wacky and very eccentric, and once he got into drugs—because we weren't—he just was more and more obtuse.

MARTIN HANNETT (from a 1989 interview): I've always been a rather solitary smack abuser. It's hard to have a social life if you've got a problem like that, though. Even people who get completely off their trolley smoking freebase look down on smack. [Hannett died in 1991 of health problems related to drug abuse.]

SUMNER: When the staff finished at about four in the afternoon, Martin would lock all the doors, and he would make us take drugs. Ian couldn't do drugs because of his epilepsy; the most he ever did was sip a few beers. Hooky didn't do any drugs, but me and Steve used to do a bit of speed. Martin didn't regard this as a proper drug, and he insisted that I do some cocaine. I said no. He said, "Well, I'm not starting work. There's the number of the dealer. Until one of you phone him, we're not fucking starting on this album." In the end, we cracked because we were getting nothing done. We called his coke dealer, got this coke, and found it extremely weak. We didn't like it anyway. But we ended up working, not surprisingly, all through the night, and then we'd go back to the flat at ten in the morning, trying to get asleep.

HOOK: Martin would say, "Make it more velvety, but coarse" or "More angular, but smooth." In those days, you didn't have the luxury of keeping all your takes, and you'd have to keep doing it over. We'd try to make him happy, but he was a fucking pain in the ass. On *Closer*, we fell out during the mixing. But his madness was fantastic: He taught us how to produce and to think in completely different ways, and to add little noises here and there to catch your ear.

HANNETT: Ian was one of those channels for the gestalt; the only one I bumped into in that period. A lightning conductor.

Recording ended on March 30, and Joy Division performed a string of London gigs in early April. As the band's following grew, the live shows became more exhausting for Curtis. On April 7 he overdosed on his epilepsy medication—now seen as his first suicide attempt—and spent the week with Wilson's then-wife, Lindsay Reade. On May 18, 1980, Ian Kevin Curtis hung himself in his Macclesfield, England home. Deborah Curtis discovered the body.

READE: That week he was depressed. I had been learning how to

hypnotize people, and one night I said, "How about me trying it out on you?" Ian went under straightaway. It was astonishing: I didn't even get to the end of the procedure. While hypnotized, he told me he was "confused." I often regret doing it, because I think I could have done more with it. If you're more schooled, you can suggest positive things to the mind, even if the mind can't perceive them.

WILSON: I remember Rob saying to me that Ian was in a kind of dream during the latter part of recording *Closer*—writing his lyrics and his songs in an almost dream state.

SUMNER: He said, "It's weird on this album, because all the lyrics are coming to me as if someone's feeding them to me." The songs were writing themselves very quickly, in a matter of minutes.

WILSON: I think all of us made the mistake of not thinking his suicide was going to happen. Ian was excited to go to America. It was strange that it could all fall apart so badly. We all completely underestimated the danger. We didn't take it seriously. That's how stupid we were.

HOOK: We had rehearsed Saturday afternoon, and I drove Ian home to his parents. He was then going home to see his wife and child, to say good-bye because we were leaving for America. We were jumping up and down on the seats in my old Jag because we were so excited we were going.

CURTIS: The last time I saw him was when I went back [to our flat]. He seemed angry with me. He said he didn't want to see me, and I wasn't to come back until after ten the next morning, because then he would be gone.

HOOK: The flight was about 5 P.M. on Sunday. [That] afternoon, I



Alone in the dark: Curtis onstage in 1979

Joy Division

was having lunch at my house with my girlfriend and the phone rang. I answered, and [a police officer] said, "I am sorry to tell you, your friend Ian Curtis has died. He's committed suicide." I said, "Okay," and sat down and carried on eating. My girlfriend asked me who had called. I said, "Ian killed himself." And I just went completely fucking numb.

SUMNER: I didn't talk to anyone. I went into withdrawal, a deep depression. I think that's a natural reaction. I felt angry at Ian—angry but immensely sympathetic at the same time. I also felt grief over losing a friend so young.

MORRIS: The whole thing seemed completely surreal. Then it was always "Why, why, why?" We didn't want to talk about Ian. But people kept coming up and going, "So why did he kill himself?" "Fuck off," you know?

HOOK: If we had known that, we would have stopped him!

Shell-shocked by the loss of their friend, Hook, Morris, and Sumner decided to carry on, rechristening themselves New Order, with guitarist Sumner taking on vocals.

HOOK: We had a tour [already booked] for Joy Division, and the publicist said, "Why don't you come anyways, and we'll do a sort of low-key tour?" We came over and did one gig in Trenton [New Jersey], and it was great. We thought, "There is life for us after death."

WILSON: Most people's perception was that Ian's death sanctified Joy Division and made them massive. My version would be: If you look back on Ian's death, it held us back from dominating the world. I remember that Bono sat on my desk about six months later and said,



True devotion: A fan at the Futurama Festival in Leeds, England, 1979

"I'm sorry about Ian's death. Ian was the greatest performer of our generation, and I always knew I was number two and not in that same league, but now that he's gone, I'll do it in his stead." Or something. I always thought it was a bit of bullshit until the Live Aid [concert in 1985], when Bono got off the stage, and I jumped out of my chair and said, "Right on kid, you've done it at last!"

Great music lasts forever, and I think the true achievement of Joy Division is that great artists normally have to make transitional albums before the next great album—they have to go through stages—[but] *Unknown Pleasures* and *Closer* were back-to-back classics.

CURTIS: For many years, I listened to *Closer* a lot. The album isn't as dark as [people] say it is. I enjoy listening to it. It's a good excuse to listen to Ian's voice again. I much prefer listening to the music than looking at photographs.

The thing that does worry me is that people

pick up on the music and decide that the depths of depression are something worth achieving. It's frightening to think that people who are depressed, or are prone to depression, are drawn to the music.

SUMNER: It's very emotional, spiritual music made by very young people. That intrigues people: How could such young people make such unhappy music?

HOOK: *Closer* is timeless. And the funny thing is, I don't listen to *Unknown Pleasures*. But every time I change the CDs in my car, I'll stick *Closer* in there as a treat for myself. The time was very melancholy for us, and that emotion is soaked in that record.

It's one of my favorite records—although the bass is too fucking low. I say that about them all, though. ■

The New New Order

A quarter-century after Joy Division, the original dance-rockers heed the Sirens' Call

Not even the members of New Order know why they take so bloody long between albums. "We played 'Krafty' recently," says bassist Peter Hook, his blond stubble and long hair giving him the look of a Mancunian Cowardly Lion. "And when we actually analyzed the song—four bars there, eight bars there—I thought, 'Why did that take so fucking long [to write]? There's nothing there!' The process is baffling."

To be fair, the band members have had plenty of distractions in the past decade or so: side projects; families; and, oh, a near-total loss of financial security, thanks to Factory Records' bankruptcy in the early '90s, a burden that drained their resources and strained their friendships. "We never broke up—we never said, 'That's it,'" recalls Sumner, 49. "[But] we had a hell of a time in the studio. We should have stopped, gone on strike, and sorted our differences out. Instead, we soldiered on, and we really weren't that happy with [1993's] *Republic*." The guitar-encrusted *Get Ready*, from 2001, was a vigorous return to form, but the keyboard swells and towering choruses of the new *Waiting for the Sirens' Call* are more reminiscent of New Order's '80s heyday.

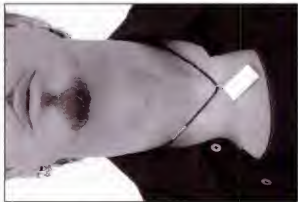
For *Sirens*, the band (which now features Phil Cunningham on guitar) tried to combine dance tracks with melodic anthems. "When we did *Get Ready*, we were a little bit self-conscious," says drummer Stephen Morris, 47. "We thought if we come back sounding like old New Order, everyone would go, 'We've heard that.' But when we went out and toured [for *Get Ready*], we just got the vibe 'We like you. Don't try to be different.'" Notes Hook: "I hate to say we're long in the tooth, but we're a bit too established—a bit too set in our ways—to really shake things up."



Not a low firm: Morris, Cunningham, Sumner, and Hook

They found a decade-straddling middle ground with producer Stephen Street, who's worked in most major phases of Britpop, from the '80s (the Smiths) through today (Kaiser Chiefs). "I've had a lot of problems with producers in the past," says Hook, 49. "I've been sort of abrasive. But he did seem to be completely in tune with us." As are most young bands crowding the Coachella tents these days. By now, New Order have almost replaced their doomed predecessor, Joy Division, as the coolest Brit band to name-drop.

"Bloc Party, the Killers—they're great bands," says Hook. "Everyone compares them to New Order, and I struggle with that, because I listen, and they just all sound fucking great to me. Maybe I can't see it because I'm in New Order." B.R.



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Senses Working Overtime

Hot Hot Heat's undying search for the new new-wave grail

By Will Hermes

Illustration by Ryan Sanchez



Hot Hot Heat Elevator

Sire/Warner Bros.

Back in the day, new wave meant different things to different people. For some it was a way to add a little bump'n'grind to punk rock, a music that seemed to consider sex, in the immortal phrase of Johnny Rotten, "two minutes and 52 seconds of squelching noise." It was also, in a time before Nirvana and Green Day, a way of

making punk palatable for the mass market: less scary, more melodic, more danceable, more photogenic. The first music video ever played on MTV, the Buggles' "Video Killed the Radio Star," was textbook new wave—camp vocals, polyester riffs, indelible tune. It was also very annoying. But never mind that.

The pressing question is, why, aside from the obvious desire of Johnny-come-latelies to Xerox the success of Franz Ferdinand, are we in the midst of a raging new-wave resurgence?

The following review offers no explanation beyond this: At core, new wave is simply fun and sexy, and at the moment there seems to be a hunger, perhaps even a faintly desperate hunger, for things that are simply fun and sexy.

Slightly ahead of the curve with both this '80s revival business and the Buy Canadian! rock movement, Hot Hot Heat initially had to worry only about what yelps and stutter riffs sounded good, not what spin on Alex Kapranos' wardrobe or on Carlos D.'s hair might set the

Reviews

masses frothing. So in 2001 they kicked out a promising self-titled EP, then a better EP (*Knock Knock Knock*) in 2002, and an even better follow-up album (*Make Up the Breakdown*). Singer Steve Bays bit off big chunks of Joe Jackson and Elvis Costello and the guy in XTC who Dogs Die in Hot Cars are so keen on and chewed them into a mouthful of mauled vowels and glottal spasms. Nothing fancy, just four shaggy guys representing with circus-flavored organ riffs, herky-jerk guitars, blinding-bright choruses, and sloppy dance moves.

Evidently at a loss for what else to do, major labels came along anyway. And without overthinking it, HHV have made their semi-bid-time record just right: fatter guitars and drums, tighter choruses, dressier arrangements. Basically the same thing—improved. There's slightly less genre-aping and some varying of dynamics. Maybe guitarist Dante DeCaro has been studying the onstage twitching of Franz's Nick McCarthy (though he's got seizure-rock moves of his own). For a group who seemed cheerily disposable, ready to make the jump to grad school and take their place as future footnotes, they sound like they might be in it for the long haul.

Bays fully understands that new-wave vocals are about percussion and repetition, and he sings his like a caffeinated cognitive scientist. Everything from his

band's name to the verses and song titles ("Goodnight Goodnight," "Jingle Jangle," "You Owe Me an IOU") sling internal rhymes, echoes, and alliteration—mnemonic devices precision-engineered to hijack your hippocampus. Where there aren't literal repetitions, Bays stretches vowel sounds like a turntablist; he may be "running out of ti-yi-yi-yime" on the opener, but he's not so rushed that he can't toss a few dozen extra syllables into his spiel. And while he doesn't have an especially rich voice, his delivery is as distinctive as any new-jack rocker, Jack White included.

What's he on about? Train-wreck girlfriends, has-been celebs, uncomputable relationships, a dead soldier, more train-wreck girlfriends. I only know that from reading the lyric sheet, and honestly, it doesn't matter much. *Elevator* is about sound, not content. If Hot Hot Heat lack the realpolitik barbs of Gang of Four or the hyperliterate bile of early Elvis Costello (who doesn't?), they still rock a party. In "Pickin' It Up," a repeat-worthy hookfest like *Make Up's* "Oh, Goddamnit," Bays waxes ambivalent about the examined life: "Why do I have to be bored with being foolish and young?" he asks. You don't, dude. You're really good at it. And for as long as you can get away with it, it seems like a totally excellent way to make a living.

Grade: B+

New-Wave Oldies

Four classics Hot Hot Heat would proudly share iPod space with
By Will Hermes



XTC, *Drums and Wires* (Virgin) If these guys were the Beatles of new wave, this is their *Revolver*, with Colin Moulding a populist McCartney to Andy Partridge's art-damaged Lennon. "Making Plans for Nigel" is the perfect postgraduation nightmarer.



Elvis Costello, *This Year's Model* (Columbia) His nastiest and most awesome record introduced the Attractions, a truly rabid garage band. Hot Hot Heat's "Pickin' It Up" could be an outtake; Elvis should really consider covering it.



Joe Jackson, *I'm the Man* (A&M) More high-strung than his debut, *Look Sharp*, and without that cheesy hit. A not-as-threatening Costello, Jackson went much the same route (big bands, orchestral compositions). It just took him less time to get boring.



The Cure, *Pornography* (Elektra) Where all aspiring new-wavers go to taste enunciation. Mercifully, Robert Smith is far less chipper here than most of his offspring. If musicians were paid for stylistic influence, he'd be golfing with Bill Gates.



Top of the morning to ya, gnomes!
Kaiser Chiefs

Kaiser Chiefs Employment

Universal
British Sea Power
Open Season
Rough Trade



Making a future out of the
Brit-rock past

Coldplay sent a rush of blood to Britpop's head, inadvertently greasing the transatlantic trade routes for a deluge of weedy guitar bands. And because we Yanks never suffered through Starsailor et al. last year, we were rewarded with Franz Ferdinand, who have ushered in a far more appealing wave of loose, funked-up dance-rock eager to liberate our car radios and monopolize our teen soaps.

Formed in Leeds during the summer of 2003, Kaiser Chiefs are one of the youngest of these new acts, and they sound like it. On their smart debut, *Employment*, the quintet bashes through nervy, synth-stoked guitar pop about Saturday nights, shirts with name tags, and the uncommon luck of being born a dancer. Frontman Ricky Wilson is an average singer

but an extraordinary melodist; every tune here—from the Buzzcocks crunch of "Everyday I Love You Less and Less" to the Todd Rundgren sweep of "You Can Have It All"—sticks to the ribs like Marmite on toast. Still, even Elbow had a few great melodies. What gives Kaiser Chiefs their extra kick is the same trick that worked for Blur before Damon Albarn joined the pan-global beat guerrillas: a dedication to daffy English humor and bouncy music-hall folderol that creates the illusion of cultural import. In "I Predict a Riot," the band's U.K. hit, Wilson describes a dodgy street skirmish while a creepy Hammond organ pumps behind him; when he launches into the "la, la, la" chorus, you can practically hear the rabid footballers howling along with him.

If this new scene can uncover hot new talent, it can also age a band prematurely. On their 2003 debut, Brighton's British Sea Power sounded like earnest Pixies fans, coughing up serrated guitar noise to accompany their breathless vocals and lost-in-the-forest stage sets. Yet *Open Season* finds these mysterious lads already advancing into their suave Roxy Music phase, draping sweeping melodies over expansive arrangements that feature strings, keys,

and field recordings of chirping birds. "I wrote elegiac stanzas for you," frontman Yan croons in the heated opener, lighting a way for all the young dudes not yet thinking about aging gracefully. Modern life: still rubbish. **MIKAEL WOOD**
Grades: Kaiser Chiefs, B+; British Sea Power, B-

Various Artists

Camping

BPitch Control



A five-year
retro of
brilliant
Berlin
techno

In the early 1990s, post-wall Berlin discovered its love for techno deep in the Cold War rubble. Newly energized by liberation and unity, the city became a hot spot for activist artists and DJs. Minimal techno/

breaks goddess Ellen Allien felt its pull, teaching herself to make beats in the basement of a communal squat and, in 1999, founding the label BPitch Control. Propelled by a demure, musical vision and an opposition to the kudzu-like commercialism that was choking techno's creativity during the rave boom, she became an underground icon, a Kraftwerkian Ian MacKaye, releasing some of the best dance music in Europe.

BPitch's five-year anniversary blowout, *Camping*, covers a half-decade of electronic music's ebb and flow—IDM, glitch, microhouse, etc.—but it's really a testament to Allien's open ear. Even riding the fickle waves of dance trends, most of these songs have aged less in five years than Melissa Rivers. The 2001 stuff revels in poppy tech-



BPitch boss Ellen Allien

house (Smash TV's "What About Me") and Fritz Lang electro (Allien's "Stadtkind"), while Sylvie Marks & Hal 9000 Indulge 2004's hybrid fetish, conjuring a country & western cow-pie guitar with a sensuous score worthy of a Brigitte Bardot (or Chloë Sevigny) night *dans gai Paree*.

As in Allien's own tunes, the BPitch catalog banks on inventive beats, but melody is its superglue. Thus, the squall of woofers and short circuits gets softened by vocalists like Fritz Kalkgrenner, Timtim, and Sylvie Marks, singing in ginger-sweet whispers as if cross-fading between disco diva Donna Summer and Ben Gibbard. It's a dynamic mix of weird pop and outré beats that imagines better dancing through hooks—wooing the techno-trepid and sending brainy dance-music lovers into palpitations, or dissertations, as the case may be. **JULIANNE SHEPHERD**
Grade: B+

Spoon

Gimme Fiction

Merge



The staying
power of
small-
stakes
indie rock

Nothing shapes you up like rejection. Just ask Wilco, who turned getting dropped from their record label four years ago into a strange kind of career move, complete with accompanying movie

and books. Or better yet, ask their Austin analogues Spoon, who in 1999 were let go from their Elektra deal, issued a petulant single about their former A&R man, then shook it off and got down to business.

On 2001's *Girls Can Tell*, and especially 2002's *Kill the Moonlight*, guitarist/singer Britt Daniel, drummer Jim Eno, and a revolving supporting cast played a catchy, cool, low-key, often sly hybrid of indie and classic rock that revealed in seemingly minor stuff. It didn't seem like an accident that *Moonlight*'s tone was set by songs called "Small Stakes" and "The Way We Get By." What they did wasn't going to change the world, and that was fine. But



Is that a yawn?
Spoon

they were going to do it as intricately and natively as possible.

Daniel's stakes haven't risen all that much on *Gimme Fiction*, but his level of intricacy has. *Fiction* is less nervous than its predecessors but emotionally knottier—the relatively straightforward "Sister Jack" seems diffuse, with Daniel lamenting "I can't relax / With my knees on the ground and a stick in my back" over Stones-y riff-chords, while the oddly swaggering "I Turn My Camera On" calls to mind a remote "Emotional Rescue": "I turn my feelings off / They've made me untouchable for life." Daniel sings in arch falsetto over a two-note disco bass and clap-slam drums. Good thing the music opens up a lot more than the words, particularly the heavy-fingered keyboard hooks that give "My Mathematical Mind," "Merchants of Soul," and "The Infinite Pet" a new-wave heft reminiscent of early Joe Jackson in rocker mode. It might not get Daniel a cottage industry like Wilco's, but it's definitely a good way to get by.

MICHAELANGELO MATOS
Grade: B-

Cormega

The Testament

Legal Hustle



A hip-hop
holy grail
gets
belated
shine

When Nas asked "What up with Cormega?" on "One Love," *illmatic*'s moving letter to a jailed buddy, everyone listening wanted to know the answer. Such was Nas' influence in the mid-'90s. By 1996 the

Queensbridge MC was out of the clink and into Nas' short-lived supergroup, the Firm, poised to join the upper echelon of East Coast tough-guy poets. Unfortunately, Cormega had yet to learn industry rule number 4,080—record company people tend to hang in the shade. He watched his Def Jam record deal crumble, his relationship with Nas implode, and his much-hyped debut, *The Testament*, get shelved. Since then, Cormega has released three well-regarded indie albums (including 2001's stunning *The Realness*). But *The Testament*, a widely bootlegged "lost treasure" among



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00 Playlist

Special guest columnist DJ Tommie Sunshine's
"Riot Sounds of the Underground"



02

Play

- 01 **The Killers**, "Mr. Brightside (Jacques Lu Cont's Thin White Duke Mix)" (Island) You know that joyful moment when a film's main character finally figures out his entire life? This is that moment set to music. Every element of the original is now more anthem—the strings soar higher, the beat kicks harder, and the melody gets a ping-ponging electro nudge.
- 02 **Beck**, "Black Tambourine" (Interscope) The Manchester-era anthem that the Primals, Mondays, or Roses were never sober enough to write. Maybe Scientology works?
- 03 **Artist Unknown**, "Style Rockets" (Style Rockets) Word is that German production wizards Tiefschwarz and "Rocker" producers Alter Ego collaborated on this enormous three-track heart attack of buzzing bass and gleeful electro, though they inexplicably deny it.
- 04 **Tiga**, "Louder Than a Bomb" (PIAS) Rockin' a '91 rap delivery, keeping the beat solid, the music simple, and working the pitch shifter, Tiga detonates this bassbin-burster.
- 05 **Daft Punk**, "Robot Rock (Soulwax Mix)" (Virgin) Though this track is ripped from '80s band Breakwater and updated by the Punksters for 2005, Soulwax rock it 20 years into the future.
- 06 **Miss Kittin**, "Happy Valentine (San Valentino Mix)" (Mute) Marco Passarani puts his Italian electro touch on this heart-breaking piece of dream pop from Kittin's *I Corn* LP and turns it into a funk-drenched disco call.
- 07 **Grace Jones**, "I've Seen That Face Before (Hell Remix)" (Gigolo) This pairing of the New York club legend and Bavarian techno titan DJ Hell makes the original production by Trevor Horn seem tame by comparison. The ultramodern sound of Saturday night on cloud nine.
- 08 **Mylo**, "Destroy Rock & Roll (Tom Neville Remix)" (Breadstf) A piano-rolling roll call of American '80s idols that commands us to "destroy" them in a military cadence that would snap anyone to attention.
- 09 **Moby**, "Lift Me Up (Superdiscount Mix, Abe Duque Dub)" (Mute) Two mixes of dirty-disco beats from Paris and Hollis, Queens, that will make you forget you are actually dancing to Moby.

Reviews

soul-seeking rap aficionados, has remained shelved. Until now.

Cornega's reissued debut is a bracing time capsule of Giuliani-era New York City hip-hop. He rhymes, quite frankly, like someone who just got out of prison, with pent-up aggression and a hunger rarely heard then or now. In his Kool G Rap-like lisp, Mega fires off crime-pays boasts loaded with vivid imagery, one line spilling into another. "Killaz Theme" has a typical Mobb Deep-ish lack of sunshine and keyboard gloom as Mega spits, "Did time for cocaine, nines, and armed robbery / My rhyme and graffiti is a live nigga prophecy." While the album has moments of soulful reflection (see his version of "One Love" or the *Hill Street Blues*-jacking "62 Pickup"), Mega is at his best when at his darkest. The revenge tale "Dead Man Walking" stands toe-to-toe with any Scarface nightmare. In the current rap climate, debates about realism and reality and how real the realism really is hit such dizzying levels you'd think we're all living in some Philip K. Dick joke. But this is an artifact from a different time; Cornega is patient zero from an era when your rap sheet had to match your raps. You can practically feel the non-fiction. CHRIS RYAN

Grade: B+



A very serious gentleman: Cornega



Hella Church Gone Wild/ Chirpin Hard

Suicide Squeeze



Two discs
of noise
rock hell-
ciousness

Of all the life-affirming things a band could lift from OutKast—fur coats, the word *Aquemini*, getting Tina Fey into jodhpurs on live TV—these twisted fucks chose packing a double CD under their

albums as a double CD under their band's name. Oy vey. Also, like OutKast, they cop moves from Prince. But instead of sexual/spiritual funk, Hella pay tribute to the Purple One's monomania by playing everything on their respective albums. Question is, who told the Sacramento spaz-nig duo that even the folks who dig migraine-inducing guitar-drum workouts have that kind of time?

It's a shame, because as a fully manned duo, Hella are capable of riffling complexity of a most athletic cast. They don't know "hooks" (a relative term among noise bands) quite the way Lightning Bolt do, but last year's *The Devil Isn't Red* stripped the Beast Master down to his thong and dumped him in a lake of fire, offering panicked prog rock for mind and body. As two lobes of one brain, Zach Hill's posthuman

drumming and Spencer Seim's finger-breaking guitar create some of noise rock's most potent alien babble. Here, they bark out a codebook in two distinct ciphers.

Seim's disc, *Chirpin Hard*, is the more accessible of the two, the album you could actually rock in an iPod. He doesn't feel the need to pack every nook and carry with data, as he often does on Hella's past records. Instead, he belches out video game blurts, quick-hit grooves, and surprisingly straightforward riffs. *Church Gone Wild* is the difficult proposition, a 59-minute suite of overloaded everything, with Hill's eight-armed drumming the highlight. Listening to it all at once isn't out of the question—if you were chained to the wall, Guantanamo-style. (Maybe Hill considers us enemy combatants.) But most will need a break from the hysterical whooshes and buzz. Somewhere in this brick house

resides a masterpiece of frantic blarney. But to divide Hella's mind is to hack their talent in half.

JOE GROSS

Grade: *Chirpin Hard*, B-;
Church Gone Wild, C+

Konono No.1 Congotronics

Crammed Discs



Mind-
melting
noise-funk
from the
Congo

In February the Motherland finally got its own MTV channel; *vive la révolution!* Sure, there may be just one TV for every 16 people in sub-Saharan Africa, but as a vehicle for boosting regional culture and pushing AIDS info, MTV-Base Africa is good news. And if its programming is anything like the Konono No. 1 video clip that



The Go-Betweens, *Oceans Apart* (Yep Roc) This '80s guitar band's best album since their reformation and also the strangest. Grant McLennan and Robert Forster once carried on a languid late-evening conversation—about the wages of love and subculture, art and pop and where it leads us—over very literate guitars. These days, the two aren't quite oceans apart—the music's sweet spot is somewhere in the space between Forster's slowly unfolding naturalist evocations ("Born to a family, a family of workers") and McLennan's airy pop romanticism. Though it's more of a mash-up of two solo EPs than an album, we're just lucky these guys still bump into each other. JON DOLAN Grade: B+

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Reviews

Mingiedi, of
Konono No. 1



intrepid blogs like the Suburbs Are Killing Us were linking to earlier this year, we suggest petitioning your cable provider immediately.

Alas, it won't be. Konono (full name: Orchestre Tout Puissant Likembe Konono No. 1 de Mingiedi) is a 25-plus-year-old street band based in the war-weary city of Kinshasa—in the Democratic Republic of Congo—that jams on thumb pianos and junkyard percussion amplified with crude DIY gear designed to whack through the city's noise like a machete. The resulting mix is a buzzing, frantically hypnotic sound-clash of ancient and modern: folk music beyond *National Geographic*, industrial music born of practical rather than metaphorical necessity. In other words, just the thing to send Western aesthetes into a frenzy,

though probably not the sort of mirror Africans will demand from their *TRL*.

Whatever. *Congotronics* is rhythmically red-hot, full of transcendent builds that DJ aficionados will feel in their bones, and it comes via the Belgian label that midwifed Mahmoud Ahmed's *Ere Mela Mela* (the mind-blowing '70s-funk comp that spurred the East African crate-diggers series *Ethiopiques*), Bebel Gilberto's creamy novo bossa nova, and Zap Mama's Pygmy-inflected hip-hop soul. It may not do for African pop what Sunny Ade and Fela Kuti did in the '80s. But as Konono tour with Tortoise and get remixed by Björk's lapping pal, Matthew Herbert, it might do for Congolese folktronica what Diplo's *Favela on Blast* mix did for Brazilian baile funk—introduce a music to alien fans happy to dig it on its own art-but terms. After all, MTV globalism ain't all it's cracked up to be.

WILL HERMES
Grade: B+

Reggie and the Full Effect Songs Not to Get Married To

Vagrant



Searching for that elusive emo funny bone

For the past seven years, James Dewees has been the goofy, nonsensical keyboard player in the Get Up Kids, the Midwest's best heart-on-sleeve guitar combo. While touring and inspiring countless MySpace crushes, Dewees found time—as bored



TURBONEGRO *The ResErection* (Bitcore/Music Video Distributors) As their Afro wigs and blackface gave way to very broad gay caricatures, Norway's self-proclaimed "uncircumcised Ramones" took expectation confounding to new heights (or is that depths?). Singer Hank von Helvete's heroin addiction broke them up in 1998, and this uncommonly earnest hour-long documentary soberly charts their eventual reunion four years later. We see von Helvete chugging cod liver oil while working as a fishing-museum tour guide, then struggling through an early rehearsal. Bonus: their rowdy comeback gig, where they resemble the Village People fronted by Alice Cooper but sound like the most furious melodic punk rock you've never heard.

DOUG BROD **Grade: B+**

twentysomethings in vans often do—to invent a fictitious “wacky” side project, Reggie and the Full Effect. Their records, most recently 2003’s *Under the Tray*, are packed with grindcore and synth parodies, recordings of Dewees playing an insane fan, and pics of him dressed as a Mexican dude named Paco. They’re also full of surprisingly clever pop songs that are a pleasant counterpoint to the Get Up Kids’ indie gloom.

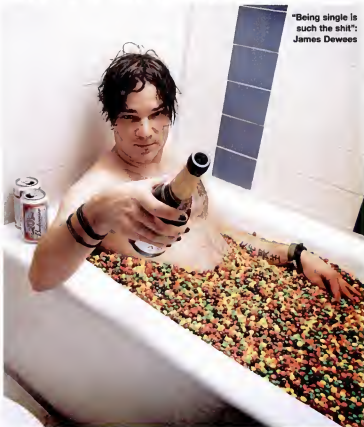
With the Kids on “indefinite hiatus,” Dewees has spent the last few months touring with New Found Glory and working through the collapse of his marriage. Once an emotional outlet, the side project is front and center. On *Songs*, Dewees is clearly trying to laugh the pain away—an admirable goal in this often cringingly melo-

dramatic genre—and when he manages to hit both the funny bone and his target demo (the irresistibly nostalgic “Get Well Soon” and the Postal Serviceable “Take Me Home, Please”), the tunes are hard to deny. But the high points struggle to peak out above silly metal tracks (“What the Hell Is Contempt?” “What the Hell is a Stipulation?”) and a field recording of a woman talking about her intimate grooming habits. Beyond the punch lines, Dewees has serious talent and an affection for new-wave greats like Jay Division and Erasure, but he spends too much time mocking instead of opening up. As one emo forebear once noted, that joke isn’t funny anymore.

ANDY GREENWALD

Grade: B-

“Being single is such the shit!”
James Dewees



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Mope Rock

The *Spin* record guide: Your monthly history of every cool album ever made



LEONARD COHEN SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN (CBS, 1967) Cohen had been a published author and a bit of a playboy for a dozen years before this collection of his stripped-down, world-weary folk songs appeared. Lines like "I'm cold as a new razor-blade" and "One hand on my suicide, one hand on the rose" proved marvelously depressing for people in tight turtlenecks and thick black glasses, and still hold an uncanny attractiveness today.



JOY DIVISION UNKNOWN PLEASURES (Factory, 1979) If you've only heard "Love Will Tear Us Apart," peep these Mancos on their sole proper album for what they really were: an incompetent metal band that somehow touched the stars. Singer Ian Curtis (the dude from Interpol's dad) sang about epilepsy, amnesia, and crushed hopes. And then he killed himself. **ALSO TRY:** *Disco Inferno, D.I. Go Pop* (Rough Trade/Bar None, 1994) English gooballs find beauty in frustration, futility, and a computer lab's worth of obsolete machines losing their shit.



THE CURE PORNOGRAPHY (Fiction/A&M, 1982) As drum machines clatter and charmingly dated keyboards loom overhead, a young Robert Smith watches the ceiling spin, feels his liver recoil in disgust, and delights at what he calls the "ice in my eyes." If this doesn't make you want to bleach your skin and read Camus, then you probably just got your nomination to the judiciary confirmed by the Senate.



THE SMITHS THE SMITHS (Rough Trade, 1984) A young Mancunian singer with one name who understands the essence of attractive mopiness: Imply, never explain. And between his fey baritone and awkward falsetto, Morrissey taps into the universality of misery—cold bedrooms, dangerous liaisons, and losing his "faith in womanhood" (hal)—till child murderers and perverts seem like just part of the brotherhood of man.



SEBADOH III (Homestead, 1991) A beautiful mess of an LP by a band always on the verge of disintegrating because all three members were always on the verge of falling apart themselves. It opens with Lou Barlow saying that he understands why J Mascis kicked him out of Dinosaur Jr., though Mascis is still a dick for doing it. The angry songs are balanced by happy relationship songs that sound suspiciously like Stockholm syndrome has kicked in for poor ol' Lou.



CODEINE FRIGID STARS (Sub Pop, 1991) Before Codeine, you had to accept that you were something of a wuss if you sat in your room and brooded. This New York-by-way-of-Oberlin College power trio made sad music rock in a way that you could flip your hair to—very s-i-o-w-l-y. But still. Rocking out. To sad music. Try it. **ALSO TRY:** *Low, I Could Live in Hope* (Vernon Yard, 1994) From frozen Duluth, Minnesota, an arrow of snow-blind sadness.



AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB MERCURY (Reprise, 1993) "I've Been a Mess" starts with the line "Lazarus wasn't grateful for his second wind," and from there Mark Eitzel gets a little grim. This lushly arranged collision between indie rock and adult-alternative music has some of the best miserablist-bastard anthems you'll ever cold-sweat through.



TINDERSTICKS TINDERSTICKS (This Way Up/PolyGram, 1995) The second self-titled LP from these London dandies sounds like a bunch of colorful convicts mounting a Burt Bacharach retrospective as a ruse to help them bust out of the hoosegow. Barely in-tune strings keen as singer Stuart Staples mumbles about his doomed sister, and the group's knack for corrupt majesty yields the best song ever to grace an episode of *The Sopranos*, "Tiny Tears." **ALSO TRY:** *Scott Walker, Scott 4* (Philips/Fonit, 1969) Bombastic orchestral pop with stunning toasts to Josef Stalin and Ingmar Bergman.



CAT POWER YOU ARE FREE (Matador, 2003) As a rule, women mope less effectively than men, who can't get over shit that easily. That's probably why so many mopey men have fantasies of showing up their exes by dating Chan Marshall, who on this record proves she can dump with the best of them. "I want for you to be a good man," she sings in her sultry Georgian accent. "This is why I am leaving."



PEDRO THE LION ACHILLES HEEL (Jade Tree, 2004) David Bazan is happily married. His breakup was with the evangelical church in which he grew up, and man, is he not over it. "You were too busy steering the conversation toward the Lord," he sings, "to hear the voice of the Spirit telling you to shut the fuck up." Bazan's low voice and soft consonants give his slow jams a paradoxical urgency—at the end of the day, like any good mope-rocker, he wants his baby back. That baby's name is Jesus.

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Breakdown

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The Raveonettes

Pretty in Black
Columbia



On their witty, tuneful debut, these good-looking Danes turned their love of early American rock into a sweet fuzz-bomb blast of imported hormones and three-chord heat. The best tune on this uneven, overly reverential follow-up is an early American rock record: "My Boyfriend's Back," rendered as a mechanical ode to that legendary heartthrob HAL 9000. **C+**

Scritti Politti

Early
Rough Trade



The Scritti of these late-'70s art-punk jams dreamed of becoming Jean-Luc Godard's "children of Marx and Coca-Cola"—mixing a love for pop's liberating power with a sneaky suspicion of its mechanisms. So, you get titles like "Hegemony" and "Messthetics," not yet self-doubting riffs and reggae grooves, and Green Gartside's lush theoretical croon. **A-**

El Pus

Hoodlum Rock:
Vol. 1
Virgin



These Atlantans generously describe their hybrid sound as "crunk music—with amps and guitars," but judging by their thin riffs and disconcertingly polite MO, neither Lil Jon nor Linkin Park need lose much sleep. Just one more lonely fallen baseball cap dotting the long, sad road to the rap-rock promised land. **C+**

Mary Timony

Ex Hex
Lookout!



Indie-rock princess goes medieval, evoking oide-worid metaphors, cranking the Devil's music as if the only way to serve the lamb of God is by the shank. She swaps ivories for angular, somewhat redundant guitars, but the ballads are still as pretty as her fan base of shy piano students and unicorns. **B+**

The Evens

The Evens
Dischord



Sounding more chastened than enraged about the ongoing Bush putch, Fugazi singer/guitarist Ian MacKaye joins drummer Amy Farina for this batch of likably moody, lo-fi sing-alongs. Don't expect any hair-raising shouts of defiance: The key line in the up-tempo opener is "It's all downhill from here." But MacKaye and Farina share a wobbly spirit that wears well. **B**

Lucero

Nobody's Darlings
Liberty & Lament/East West



Admirable country-rock depressives led by gravel-tongued singer Ben Nichols, who beats dismissive critics to the punch on the Uncle Tupelo-indebted title track, then blows his stoicism with I'm-a-smokin'-and-a-drinkin' tales of woe. Discovering that cigarettes and whiskey don't mix makes him get choked up. Or maybe it's all that phlegm in his throat. **B-**

Various Artists

Fabriclive.20: Mixed
by Joe Ransom
Fabric



Can't find that legendary M.I.A./Diplo mix tape on Soutseet? Accept this milder, but still penetrating, substitute—its smoother groove goes easier on the dancehall but honors the full spectrum of U.K. hip-hop, from 2-stepping Zinc and Stanton Warriors remixes to straight-up BnI-rap (Ty, Rodney P) to grime (Dizze Rasca) to M.I.A. herself. **B+**

Goldie Lookin' Chain

Straight Outta
Newport
Record Collection



The Streets hath wrought an Insane Clown Posse, only this Welsh wankstap-rap crew is a bit more genteel. Titles like "Your Mother's Got a Penis" make the case clearly enough. While they do have their flourishes, it's unlikely they'll resonate beyond anyone who's had impure thoughts about more than one Spice Girl. **C-**

MF Doom

Live From Planet X!
Nature Sounds



Masked Underdog Rule No. 162: Survivors are made, not born. Which might be why the metal-faced indie rapper's live album tests endurance, culling 38 minutes from a muddily mixed, occasionally inspired San Francisco performance on one non-fast-forwardable track. Withstand the singing and corny-uncle one-liners, and you'll be a survivor too. **B-**

The Mountain Goats

The Sunset Tree
4AD/Beggars



This disc isn't as immediately grabby as the divorce gothic *Tallahassee* or as richly adorned as last year's addition/redemption spiral *We Shall All Be Healed*, but by investigating the home of his California youth and abusive stepdad, John Darnielle's written some of the toughest and most open-souled music of his lo-fi outlet's oft-brilliant history. **B+**

Z-Trip

Shifting Gears
Hollywood



Turntable mandarin Z-Trip ably builds bridges to hip-hop's past and present, real and imagined. While distributing collabs to indie rappers Busdriver, Aceyalone, and Lyrics Born, he drops a crossover dud with Linkin Park's Chester Bennington and gives a somewhat unfortunate pound to Chuck D. But his buoyant spirit is enough to redeem any missteps. **B**

Grayskul

Deadivers
Rhymesayers



Superhero-obsessed goth-hoppers from Seattle's Oldominion crew duck into a phone booth and reemerge as...comic book geeks who just called in their Marvel orders. Over noisish clock tower bells and suspenseful, labyrinthine beats, Fiddle Back Recluse and Reason spin whip-smart mythologies about werewolves, vampires, and the mad volatility of American politics. **B+**

Reissues

More proof it was all better before you were born By Will Hermes

A band that never made eye contact: Dinosaur Jr.



Dinosaur Jr., *Dinosaur Jr., You're Living All Over Me, Bug (Merge)* Three of the most beautifully brutal guitar records ever made charted a fantasy realm in which fans of Neil Young, Motörhead, Sonic Youth, Hüsker Dü, and Dio could hold hands and ride a jet stream of soaring, pedal-to-metal noise melodies. The self-titled debut has punk pluck; *All Over Me* has the mighty "Sludgefeast," plus a video of the band covering the Cure's "Just Like Heaven" (better than the original). But *Bug* has "Freak Scene," the most stirring breakup song about a relationship that never quite started. Bet someone on your IM list deserves it.



Rocky Erickson, *I Have Always Been Here Before: The Rocky Erickson Anthology (Shout!)* Erickson began his career as a 19-year-old hoodoo-mystic better in the 13th Floor Elevators, who pretty much invented psychedelic garage rock with their 1966 debut. A few years later, he was busted for six joints and, attempting to avoid jail time, wound up in a mental institution getting electroshock (popular in Texas at the time, to judge from the film *Tarnation*). The post-psychward solo stuff on this definitive comp is better than you'd expect. And the Elevators' tracks might convince Kings of Leon to add an electric jug player.



Optimo, *How to Kill the DJ [Part Two] (Tigersushi)* Wasn't this whole dance-rock thing supposed to bring us together? Instead, beat freaks still roll in the back room while punk-funkers white line-dance up front. So give it up to the Scots duo

Optimo for breaking down the walls. This mix-tape installment smooches the Stranglers, Gang of Four, Suicide, and Laibach (!) together with Carl Craig, Ricardo Villalobos, and German nü-school *schaftel-meisters* like Superpitcher. Masterstroke: the kids of the Langley Schools Music Project busting out "Good Vibrations" midset like it was a disco prayer.



Radio Sumatra: *The Indonesian FM Experience; Radio Phnom Penh (Sublime Frequencies)* Half the fun of traveling is gazing local radio, so those of us too broke to globe-trot can thank Alan Bishop (of Northwest art-punk vets Sun City Girls) for Sublime Frequencies, a postcard-from-a-friend label that has built a cottage industry out of exotic radio collages and other audio archaeology. These two collections are as much mutant Western pop as "world music," with Indonesian rap-rock, heavy-metal guitar bursts, cheesy balladry, and abrasive DJ spiels. Recommended to fans of open-eared indie rockers like Man Man and Mono Pause/Neung Phak, who know America has no monopoly on weirdness.

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real-life rock tales

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